

DC Gazette

June 1979

VOL. X Nr. 5

25¢ at DC newsstands; 50¢ by mail & out of town

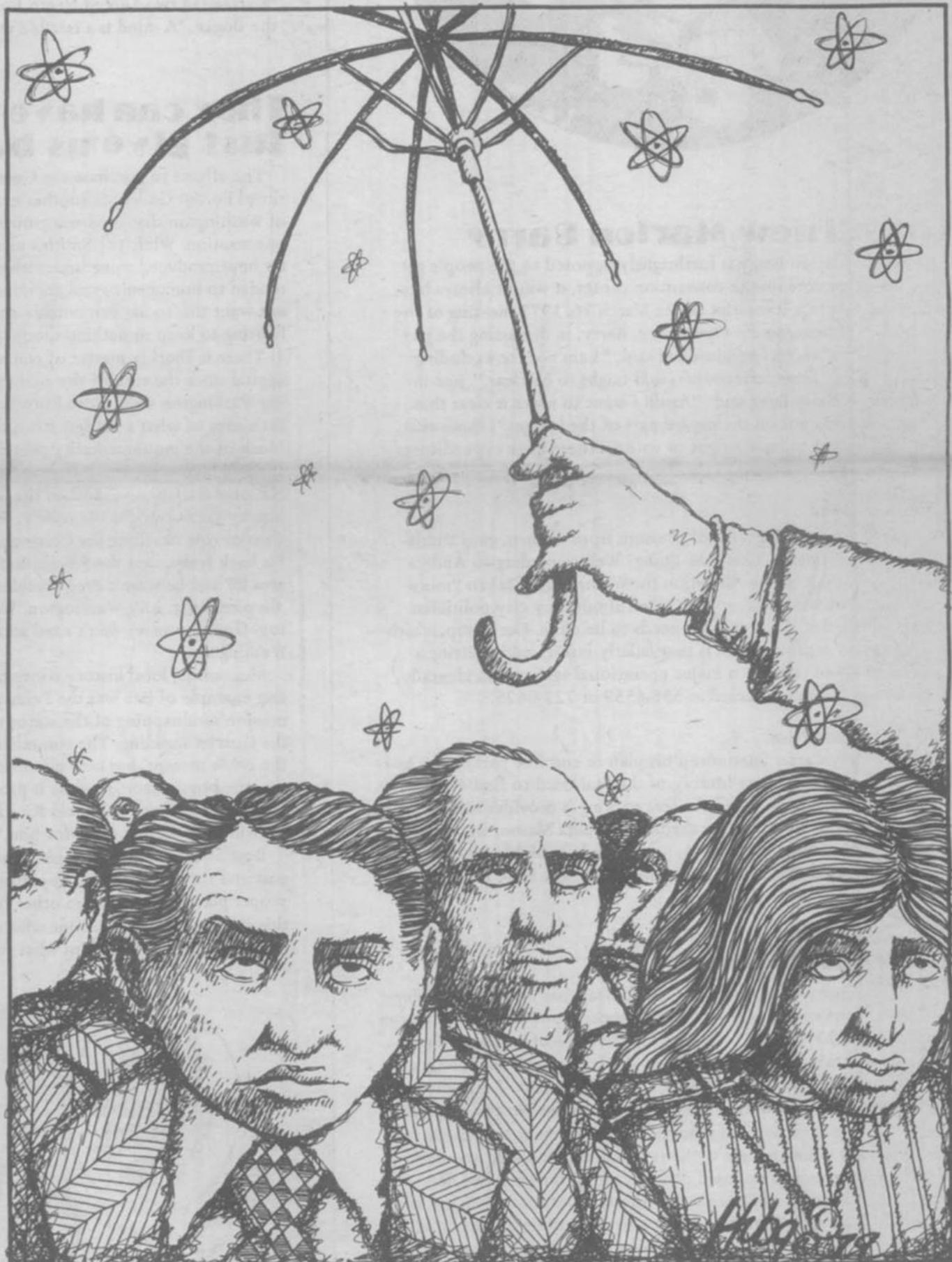
America Turns on Its Children

*The other
side of
Boontown*

*What's a
humanities?*

*The aesthetics
of the
Universal
Product Code*

*VAT:
A hidden
sales tax*



Address correction requested
Return postage guaranteed
DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave NW
DC 20009



The all new Marion Barry

Although Marion Barry is forthrightly opposed to the people getting a chance to vote on the convention center, it wasn't always like that. According to a transcript of the March 16, 1977 meeting of the Committee on Government Operations, Barry, in discussing the proposed initiative and referendum bill said, "I am not for excluding capital projects from referendum; that ought to be clear." Just in case it wasn't, Barry later said: "Again I want to make it clear that my argument was not on the capital part of the budget. I think that the citizens ought to have a right to vote on these huge expenditures of money."

On the other hand....

Barry has been getting a lot of pressure from women, gays and latinos for appointments. How's he doing? Well, according to Andrea McCombs, co-chair of the Coalition for Women, he's taken "more positive steps on behalf of women" than almost any city politician in the country. But she says more needs to be done. Her group, which has 13 member organizations, is particularly interested in getting a woman appointed to head a major operational agency. Incidentally, the Coalition can be contacted at 588-6559 or 722-0625.

Bill's got it figured out....

After Jimmy Carter announced his plan to end free parking for government employees, Laura Murray of the Star tried to find out whether the city council would end the free parking it provides itself. Not much enthusiasm for the idea except from Hilda Mason, who says she is against free parking for anyone, no matter how highly placed. Responded Bill Spaulding: "The parking spaces are not free. The city pays for them."

Stopping the draft

A Washington Committee to Stop the Draft has been formed. Peggy Frantz is the coordinator and she is working out of the Washington Peace Center, 234-2000. . . . Aside from the issue of revival of the draft the committee is also concerned about proposed plans to grant the Selective Service a waiver to the 1975 Privacy Act. According to the committee, "This waiver would allow Selective Service to go directly to the records of all schools and government agencies in order to register young people without them even knowing about it."

The committee also opposed plans to merge the Selective Service into the Department of Defense. Ms. Franz points out: "Such a merger would have severe implications for conscientious objectors. Since the military would then run any conscientious objector programs, many people would in good conscience be unable to cooperate with the programs and therefore face prison sentences."

Nuke Notes

Marion Barry didn't win any points for city hall's handling of the May 6th demonstration plans. Said one District Building worker, "He's forgotten where he came from." . . . Anti-nuke posters in Du-

pont Circle environs were being torn down as fast they were put up. . . . There was apparently some feeling in town that nuclear power was a white issue. On the other hand, nuclear fallout is an equal opportunity employer.

Free Reno Road

The Chevy Chase Commission has endorsed a citizen petition calling on the Department of Transportation to reduce high speed traffic on Reno Road. The petition calls for stop signs at most intersections, permitting on-street parking and prohibiting bus traffic and through truck traffic. DOT has to respond to the commission proposal within five months. . . . We hear that Edward Bennet Williams interceded with developer Jeff Cohen to give Ellen's Irish Pub a reprieve until the end of May. . . . The Dupont Circle Commission is asking for low and moderate income housing in its neighborhood.

No Comment. . . .

Speaking at the United Negro College Fund benefit, hizoner said: "I attended two United Negro Fund colleges and I'm an example of the slogan, 'A mind is a terrible thing to waste.' "

They can have George, just give us back the Boss

The efforts to purchase the George and Martha portraits for the National Portrait Gallery is another example of the cultural avarice of Washington that has been growing steadily since the Kennedy Administration. While the Smithsonian, Wolf Trap and the Kennedy Center have produced some undeniable good for the city, they have also tended to homogenize and centralize culture. The folks in Boston do not want this to happen outside the capital as well and are justifiably fighting to keep something special in their town.

There is another matter of concern. Much of the planning in this capital since the turn of the century has been directed towards making Washington seem more historic than it is. Tourists today have little idea of what a modest town this was not too many years back. Much of the monumentality post-dates Warren Gamaliel Harding (the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, the Supreme Court, the National Gallery and most of the federal office buildings). The aura of history far outweighs the reality. As for George, he may have played a major role in selling the Congress on a capital just upstream from his back forty, but the Revolutionary War pretty much passed this area by and he wasn't even president here. If any town deserves to get the portraits, it isn't Washington. We say let the paintings stay in Boston. God knows we don't need another reason for people to hate Washington.

Meanwhile, local history continues to get short shrift. Most upsetting example of late was the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Commission's kidnapping of the statue of Boss Shepherd from in front of the District Building. The commission, which has never understood the city's present, has now eliminated a rare symbol of its past, putting the boss in storage while it proceeds with its superfluous activities in front of city hall. Said Rita Adams of the PADC: "One day we will find another place for him."

Boss Shepherd had his faults, but he is an important part of our past and the statue should be returned to the city government for proper placement, if for no other reason than to remind us that once this city was run by someone who never would have let a bunch of federal bureaucrats tell him what to do with downtown.



Marion Barry
Marion Barry, Jr.
Mayor

This is a typical signature of the mayor as found on a recent document. You will note that while Marion Barry contains only one 'i' there are two distinct dots in the signature. Sometimes they lean to the right and sometimes they lean to the left. What does the second dot mean? What does the change in angle mean? And help from graphologists or psychologists will be appreciated.

JUST FOLLOW THE BIG BLACK LIMOSINES OUT OF TOWN

"I think it is a falsity for the government to even pretend they can get people out [of town] in a couple of hours," Mayor Barry told a group of nuclear protesters recently. "There is no defense against a runaway nuclear plant. We don't have any plans in the District." . . . There are supposed to be 5000 emergency shelters in DC, but Richard Botoff of the Office of Emergency Preparedness admits that many don't have food, water or medical supplies, according to a report in the Rock Creek Monitor. . . . If you want to get on the nuclear case locally, contact the Potomac Alliance at 387-7955.

Mystery master plan

Hill residents are anxiously awaiting the Capitol Architect's master plan, due to be completed by late summer. Although neighborhood groups thought they had made some progress with the Architect's consultants, with a shift towards conservation and away from staff expansion, the Architect has got a new appropriation of \$100,000 principally for "a design investigation to examine potential relaxation of previously assumed constraints." That's bureaucratese for trouble.

. . . The Planning & Housing Association is worried about the new housing finance agency. It reports: "While the legislation promises that at least some low and moderate income people will benefit, there are many loopholes which would allow a conservative agency to minimize those benefits. For example, the mandates to serve low income tenants could be met primarily with elderly tenants to the exclusion of large families. If the HFA fails to meet the overall 25% goal [for low and moderate income] it may submit an explanation of the failure to the city council. Unless the council takes specific action to reject the explanation, the HFA will be relieved of its obligation to meet the low income goal. A shortage of federal subsidy funds, a failure to appropriate DC subsidy funds, or a failure to use excess HFA funds for needed subsidies could all undercut the legislation's goals."

NEW LOOK AT THE WASHTONUN MAGAZINE

Will Jack Limpert start dropping syllables from the middle of words? Will Marion Barry demand that city magazine owners live in the city? Will a restaurant on South Charles Street make the Top 1% list? Only time will tell. . . . Crappies over a foot long reported at the Watergate (the original one, that is, where the Rock Creek empties into the Potomac) . . . Hunger Project holds Mother's Day Festival May 13 noon to five at the Sylvan Theatre. Food, frisbees and frivolity promised. . . . Some Neighborhood Planning Council types nervous about possible takeover of the NPCs by Neighborhood Commissions.

CAVIAR COVERUP CONTINUED

At presstime, we were still awaiting some mild expression of interest by the local media in reports that some of its more eminent colleagues were on the take from ex-Iranian Ambassador Ardesir Zahedi. Apparently, when the home team is caught playing, it's blacked out locally.

So we've been forced to rely upon the Village Voice's Alexander Cockburn, one of the few journalists who seems curious about this

funny business. Says Cockburn, "It seems that gifts worth up to \$10,000 were recorded in three blue ledger books which were kept not in Zahedi's office, but elsewhere in the embassy." The precise location of these books is unclear and there are also reports that Zahedi kept other ledgers, which recorded recipients in the over-\$10,000 class and which he allegedly took with him when he fled.

Cockburn also quotes an article in the Dallas Morning News, put out over the UPI wire, in which "Barbara Strong quoted an unnamed employee in the Washington embassy as saying that couriers from Tehran would arrive regularly with silk rugs worth from \$5000 to \$20,000, boxes of gold coins, and, of course, tin upon tin of caviar." Zahedi and assistants would sort out these grants in aid and dispatch them by chauffeur to the neediest and the greediest. . . . Zahedi regularly paid for journalists to visit Iran, the embassy employee claimed." In a later article, Strong quotes Elspeth Swain, once Zahedi's personal secretary, as saying that some 4,000 people were on the gift list, including 40 senators and a slightly larger number of congressmen."

The only senator Strong could find who returned a gift from Zahedi was Senator Richard Schweiker, who sent back a tin of caviar worth \$294. Jacob Javits later said he returned a case of Dom Perignon.

Caviar seems like a trifling matter, until you realize a tin is worth \$294. If the estimate of 4000 recipients is correct and, say, Zahedi gave them each a tin, that would amount to over \$1 million in gifts. That's before getting into the silk rugs, free flights to Iran, gold coins and so forth. It is a story, one would think, worth something more than being placed in the futures file.'

THE FAUNTROY FUMBLE

From a US News & World Report story on the DC congressional voting rights amendment: "The states have until 1985 to make the amendment part of the Constitution. Right now, analysts predict that its death notice will be written long before then." . . . Sidwell Friends goes before the BZA May 23 for permission to build a gym, art center and maintenance building. . . . Mayor Barry has chided the Board of Trade for its "Man of the Years Dinner." He wrote BOT executive vice John Tydings: "I am usually reluctant to attend or support events which seem explicitly designed to favor one sex over another, one race over another, etc. I understand you are considering taking steps internally to broaden the focus of the award next year, so that no one is ineligible by reasons of birth, such as their sex. Therefore, I very much look forward to your assurances that you are making such a policy change."

FILMS OF THE LEFT

The Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee is showing a series of films that include "Nothing But a Man" on May 18, "Joe Hill" on June 15 and "Dr. Strangelove" on July 13. All films start at 8 in the Machinists Building auditorium, 1300 Conn. Ave. NW. There will be a \$2 charge; but you get free popcorn and an informal discussion. Info: 206-7693.

CORRESPONDENCE

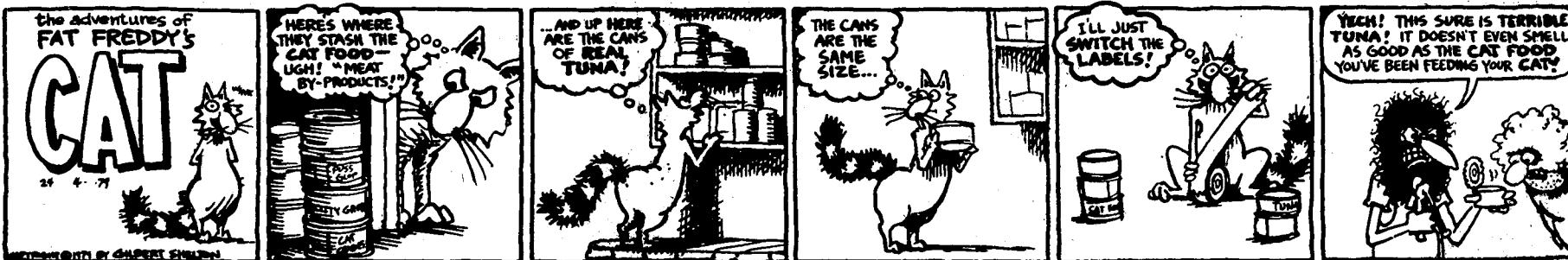
Fields bloom again

Fields of Plenty has been in Adams Morgan on 18th Street near Columbia Road for seven years and because it is anti-profit the going has never been easy, at least not with landlords, local government officials and other profit-oriented forces.

Most recently, these forces came down heavy when on three different occasions the DC police effectively closed Fields of Plenty for not having an occupancy permit or business license, both of which were paid for last summer. The customers were told that they couldn't make purchases and had to leave. But one time when this happened many stayed at the store, outraged at its closing. Others were called and they worked until long after midnight that night doing carpentry, plumbing, and cleaning to prepare the store for the health department inspection that it finally passed.

The permit and license have been released to Fields of Plenty after six months of some undue harassment on the part of the police. But also some well needed commitment on the part of the community.

CECILIA DALGIA



Bugs, Worms, Juice and Coffee

Georgetown Day School is running a morning of classes on everything from bugs, worms and dirt to cooperative cooking that can be attended by children and their parents. The classes will be held on May 12 and you can pre-register by May 11 with Gail Berendzen at 333-7727. After classes there will be an informal coffee gathering for parents and the usual juice and cookies.

Carter Cuts Deep

According to the Metropolitan Washington Council on National Priorities, Carter's proposed budget cuts will mean a loss of over one million dollars to the area's economy due to changes in social security and disability programs, a reduction of one-third in summer youth jobs nationwide, a freeze on transportation funding at fiscal '79 levels, a loss of summer meals for at least 5000 DC children, and a loss of \$4 million out of an anticipated \$5 million in federal impact aid dollars for education in DC schools. Further, public housing cuts will hold the number of new units to 800.

Boom to End?

Forbes Magazine says the city has the highest occupancy rate

on commercial space of any downtown in the country. But, in an article by Fern Schumer, it warns, "No boom is eternal, of course, and office space in the District's central business area could be overbuilt by 1981. Schumer also reports, "of the large downtown buildings partially or completely sold in the last four years, about 50% have been bought by foreigners." . . . One of the neighborhood commissions wanted to know if it could accept the gift of an addressograph machine. Not without a city council resolution, it was told by city auditor Matt Watson. Maybe neighborhood commissions should start bombarding the council with requests for permission to accept gifts, so the council will end its silly restrictions in this area. Incidentally, Watson also said that the gift of the machine would be tax-deductible if the council ever got around to approving it.

PUD Hearing Coming Up

The Zoning Commission's controversial new rules concerning planned unit developments in residential neighborhoods comes up for hearing on May 14 at 1:30 pm. . . . DC Feminist Alliance holds Mother's Day Picnic May 13, 10:30 am to 4 pm at the Rock Creek

(Please turn to page 14)

FOR RUNNERS**The Pouch™**

The perfect solution for carrying keys, identification, tissue, medication, change... All leather. Clips on securely. Light and non-irritating.
A Great Gift! \$8.95

Send check or money order to DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW, DC 20009. DC residents add 45¢ tax (\$9.40 total).

**CALLIGRAPHY by
Tina Hudak • 333-4189
evenings**

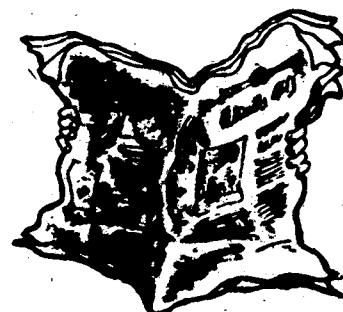
IRISH ROOTS

THE IRISH DIASPORA IN AMERICA by Lawrence J. McCaffrey was described in the New York Times as "the best short history

Now available in paper from the DC Gazette 1739 Conn. Ave. NW, DC 20009, for \$4.95. (DC residents add 25¢ sales tax).

ANSWERS

Susan Meehan's widely praised guide to community resources in DC. Where to go for help, how to deal with various problems etc. Truly useful. Send \$4.95 plus 25¢ DC tax and 40¢ for postage and handling (\$5.60 total) to DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW DC 20009

**THE NEWS BEFORE IT HAPPENS**

FOR MORE THAN 12 years the Gazette has been bringing you the news before it happens: ideas and issues that are going to shape the future but which the other media pass by. If you want to stay a step ahead, you can get a year's trial subscription for only two dollars. Use the form below.

DC GAZETTE
1739 Conn Ave NW, DC 20009

Please send me a year's trial subscription to the Gazette. I enclose two bucks.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP _____

THE ART POSTER

This original silkscreen print by noted artist Lou Stovall is available exclusively from the DC Gazette. Printed in five colors, it will be appreciated by artists, collectors, teachers, and children interested in art. An unmounted edition costs \$15 plus 75¢ DC sales tax and \$1.50 postage and handling (\$17.50 total). The mounted edition costs \$20 plus tax and must be picked up. Send check or money order to DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW DC 20009. If you wish to view the print, please call 232-5544.

WORDEN ROBINSON ART POTTERY

Sales • Kilns • Wheels • Glaze Materials
Plus Our Special Clay Body
AC - 703 - 987 - 8625

Folger Apartments

ON - THE - PARK
One bedrooms, efficiencies and studios
411 2nd St. SE 765-2625

DC GAZETTE

The Gazette is published monthly except during the summer when it is published bi-monthly. Our deadline is the second Tuesday of the month except for ads, which should be submitted by the third Tuesday of the month.

The Gazette is a member of the Alternative Press Syndicate and uses the services of Liberation News Service, Pacific News Service, College Press Service, Zodiac News Service, HerSay News Service and Community Press Features.

The Gazette welcomes contributions. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Payment upon publication.

The Gazette is available by mail for \$5 a year. First class \$2 a year extra. Singles copies are \$50¢ if mailed and 25¢ at selected newsstands.

EDITOR: Sam Smith
CARTOONIST: John Wiedenhofer
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER: Leonard Cohen
NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Waldrop Fenster
ROVING CORRESPONDENT: Josiah X. Swampoodle

DC GAZETTE
1739 CONNECTICUT AVE. NW (#2)
DUPLICANT CIRCLE, DC 20009
232-5544

The Weather Report

NR. 1 JUNE 1979

30¢

America Turns on Its Children

By Rasa Gustaitis

ON THE Greek island of Aegina, where I once lived with a family of fishermen and farmers, the usual evening's entertainment was Aristidakis, the baby. Everyone sat in the courtyard and bounced him from lap to lap, admiring his every gurgle. He was the youngest, so he was the prince.

Among us today, however, children are no longer treasured as incarnations of the future. They are increasingly shunned as dispensable cost burdens and public nuisances.

Most American families have long ceased to need heirs as they are still needed on Aegina, to go out in the fishingboat with the aging father, to tend the olive trees. Nor does our economy require them as it moves deeper into the post-industrial age. Too many already clamor for a shrinking supply of jobs, land, space, resources.

And so our children have become the least visible and most powerless of our unrepresented minorities. They are feared, mistrusted, set apart from the rest of us. The fear is sharpest among the middle classes, but it extends across class and race boundaries.

"Society has turned against children," Frank J. Macchiarola, chancellor of New York City's school system, remarked recently, while struggling with a massive bureaucracy in which one million children sometimes seem of only incidental importance.

"You find that's true everywhere," agreed Barbara Zerzan, mother of two youngsters in Berkeley. "There is talk about making separate places for children in airplanes and in restaurants. I don't feel comfortable taking mine anywhere these days. There's just a sense that children are a bother and they're not human, really."

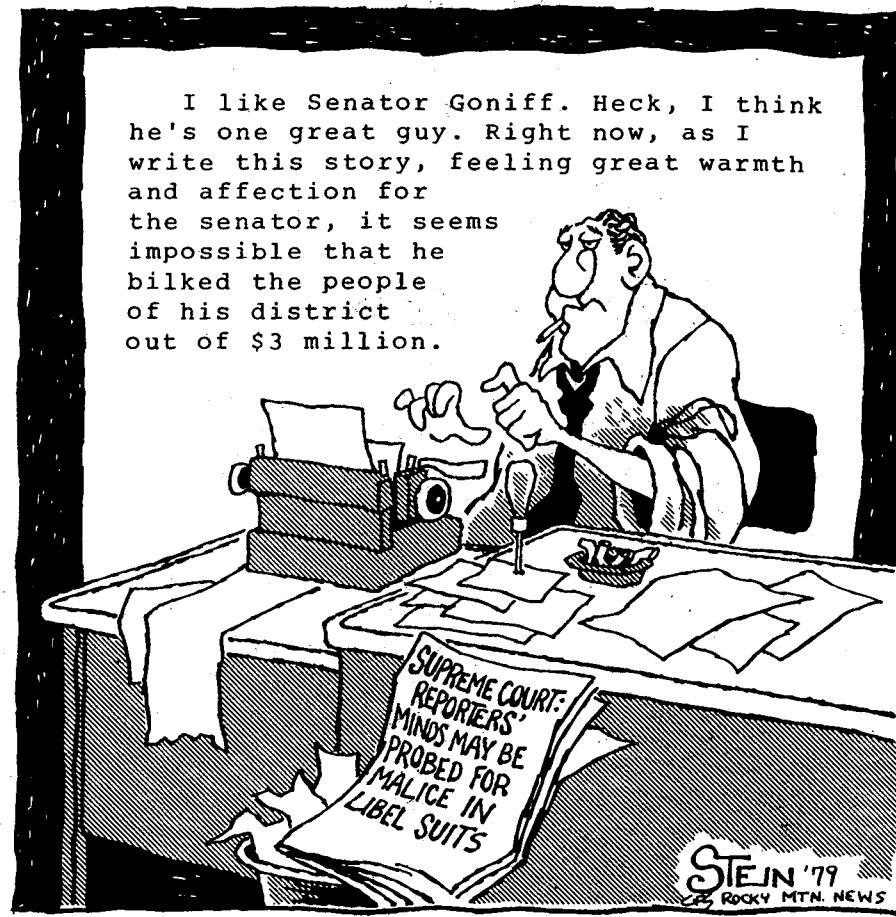
The anti-child climate is detectable in government spending programs, in law, in business trends and in personal choices.

School bond issues used to sail through elections. Now they often fail to pass even when a state of emergency is clear. Some communities have closed schools rather than allocate the extra money needed to keep them running.

"The continued decline in public support for public education implies that major expenditure increases in education will face increasing political resistance," according to Michael Kirst, president of the California State Board of Education. "In California, referenda for parks and environment passed at a much higher rate than education expenditures."

The President's proposed budget further demonstrates that investment in children is valued far less than other investments in the future. The Head-start program, which now serves only 20 percent of eligible pre-school children and exists in only 1000 of the nation's 3000 counties, has been al-

I like Senator Goniff. Heck, I think he's one great guy. Right now, as I write this story, feeling great warmth and affection for the senator, it seems impossible that he bilked the people of his district out of \$3 million.



loted a \$20 million increase for fiscal 1980 over 1979 — although \$50 million is required just to maintain the present level of services.

"So more than 20,000 children will have to leave the program, or the general quality of services will have to be reduced," according to Paul Smith, research director of the Children's Defense Fund. Meanwhile, he pointed out, the proposed Defense budget shows a three per cent real increase, over and above inflationary increases.

Along with the growing reluctance to spend public money on children and youth, a more punitive attitude toward them has developed.

In 1977, the Supreme Court found that corporal punishment does not violate the Eighth Amendment, which forbids cruel and unusual punishment. Last year, the United Teachers of Los Angeles voted nine to one to bring spanking back to the public schools from which it had been banned in 1975.

In the juvenile justice system, the fear of youth crime has led to a new emphasis on control rather than rehabilitation and to the lowering of the age for criminal liability to 16 in some states. Yet FBI Uniform Crime Reports show violent juvenile crime has not increased overall in recent years. In fact, in the four major violent crimes — murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault — recent figures show a decrease in juvenile offenses.

The public abandonment and rejection of the young comes at a time when sizeable numbers of couples are choosing to have no offspring, opting to be 'child-free' rather than childless, and decrying what they call "pro-natalism," the social pressure toward parenthood.

Less than a decade ago, Mills College valedictorian Stephanie Mills made news when she announced during graduation that she would have no children because the population explosion was threatening the planet's survival.

Now the key motive for childlessness — or freedom from children — tends to be personal. Parenthood is viewed by many as an obstacle to personal fulfillment.

To understand the anti-child climate, it makes sense to look at some recent trends. As the present generation of children matures, it finds itself elbowing immigrants at the lowest levels of employment

and, up on top, blocked by elders who live longer and seek to hold on to productive jobs as long as they can.

Millions of lower-rung children are now growing into adulthood with no chance at satisfying job. Meanwhile, freshly made teachers, lawyers and other professionals find there is no room for them within their chosen fields of endeavor as computers-on-a-chip, tax cuts and inflation cut away at public and private employment.

So there is no need, in the traditional sense, for more children — and the social organism has begun to shrink their number.

The shrinkage is taking place in white America, which is growing older while non-whites continue to increase and grow younger. Since 1970, a recent Census Bureau survey shows, the number of people 55 years and older has increased by 5.3 million while the youthful population was growing smaller — except among non-whites.

Non-whites now account for three out of four children in the public schools of eight major cities. In 13 other cities, more than half the public school children are black, or from other non-white minority groups.

And since it's whites who vote more and tend to run for office and preside over bureaucracies, they see less and less need for services to children and youth. Minority children have always been less visible, except when they explode into violence.

As public services for children shrink and as inflation speeds up, the words "child" and "youth" increasingly cast shadows that stretch from present to future.

Economic necessity requires both parents to work — yet publicly supported pre-schools and children's centers are scarcer than ever in the tax-cut era and good private centers are too costly for many. Housing is increasingly expensive and scarce. Many landlords refuse to rent to people who have children, even where anti-discrimination ordinances exist.

The typical urban home, which used to be designed with families in mind, is not suitable now for life with children. The most rapidly growing group of home-seekers is what urban real estate dealers call the SSWDs — single, separated, widowed or divorced.

DC Gazette
1739 Conn. Ave. NW
DC 20009
FIRST CLASS MAIL

CHILDREN CONT'D

With the high rate of divorce, a commitment to parenthood comes with a risk of being left alone, encumbered and impoverished, with a child for whom there is no natural place. It makes women hesitate — all the more so since feminist rhetoric often warns against the "baby trap."

If current trends continue, therefore, it is reasonable to assume that children will continue to be

viewed as troublesome creatures of little redeeming social value.

Perhaps the anti-child trend is the species' response to a biological need to diminish the assault on our biospheric life-support system. On the other hand, it may be a symptom that our civilization, having lost a vision of the future, is on a self-destructive course.

(C)PNS 1979

EARLY WARNINGS

A MAJOR three-day long rock festival is being planned for this summer to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Woodstock. The Village Voice reports that many of the same organizers behind the Woodstock festival of 1968 have come together again to promote a "Woodstock '79," tentatively scheduled for August 14-16.

According to the report, about a third of the rock groups at this summer's festival will be repeats from the 1969 festival; another third will consist of major current rock acts; and the remaining third are described as musical groups "on the way up."

Tickets will reportedly cost \$37.50 and although a site has not been found, the organizers are looking for someplace close to Max Yasgur's farm in upstate New York where the original show was held.

THE CITIZENS ENERGY PROJECT reports that continued expansion of nuclear power is "totally incompatible with the preservation of basic civil liberties" in the United States.

A 120-page study from the group says there are already disturbing indications that a large number of federal agencies are using nuclear security as justification to create or expand their own police forces and intelligence gathering networks.

Authors Ken Bossong and Donna Warnock say they have documented dozens of instances of "wiretaps, office break-ins, distribution of incorrect or libelous information, harrassing phone calls and other illegal actions" by police agencies purportedly involved in investigating nuclear threats.

THE CENTER FOR UFO STUDIES says it has obtained a summation of an official French report that concludes that UFOs are real, and that they cannot be explained by conventional science. In 1977, the French government formed a panel of scientists and psychologists to investigate the most reliable reports of UFO sightings. The panel, known as Gepan, allegedly concluded that there is a "flying machine... whose modes of sustenance and propulsion are beyond our knowledge."

THE JOURNAL OF THE American Medical Association is linking those new protective helmets that football players wear with a rise in the number of broken necks among football players. The Journal says it has documented 1129 serious football injuries, mostly among high school and college players, since 1971. Of these, the Journal says, 550 were from broken necks, with 176 of the cases resulting in permanent paralysis from the neck down. Apparently, the new protective helmet facemask system has effectively protected the head, but by doing so, it has allowed the head to be used as battering ram in tackling and blocking, thus causing more broken necks.

The Weather Report is a newsletter of alternative ideas and action published by the DC Gazette. It is a supplement to the DC Gazette but is available separately for \$3 a year. Published monthly except during the summer. The DC Gazette and The Weather Report use the services of Liberation News Service, Pacific News Service, College Press Service, Zodiac News Service, Her Say News Service and Community Press Features.

EDITOR: Sam Smith
Member Alternative Press Syndicate. Address all correspondence to The Weather Report, c/o DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW, DC 20009. Tel: 202-232-5544.

punishable by life imprisonment, but rape convictions are hard to obtain in court because detailed physical evidence of the crime is required.

BIO-DEGRADABLE cleaning agents may not be so harmless to the environment after all. Scientists at the University of California at Riverside say they have discovered that previously unrecognized low-level poisons are one of the by-products of bio-degradable detergents used in washing machines and dish washers. Dr. Garrison Sposito says that the toxic chemicals are "deadly to some aquatic species," and, in large enough quantities, even poisonous to mammals. The chemicals can persist for up to a year.

JOHN BARTON of the Stanford Institute for Energy Studies has suggested that an international atomic control organization be given complete control over the world's uranium supply, nuclear processing facilities and waste disposal. Barton can be reached at 415-497-4459.

THE Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press has compiled an index of media women. You can get



This poster, which nicely expresses the spirit of appropriate technology, is available from RAIN: Journal of Appropriate Technology, 2270-B NW Irving, Portland, Oregon 97210. The poster costs \$3. You can get a sample copy of RAIN for \$1 and they also have a number of publications on AT matters.

a copy for \$8 from WIFP, 3306 Ross Place NW DC 20008.

THE INSTITUTE for Ecological Policies has come up with a guidebook to help local groups develop a local energy plan. It costs \$5 from the IEP, 9208 Christopher Street, Fairfax, Va. 22031.

DAN McCoy has founded a group to fight discrimination against ugly people. He says, "Attractive doesn't mean good and ugly doesn't mean bad. Whether it's on a blind date or on a job application, give ugly people a chance." You can contact Uglies Unlimited, c/o Dan McCoy, 1714 Merrimack, Garland, Tex. 75043.

THE INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES has taken over In These Times, the socialist weekly.

AN INTERNATIONAL guide to profanity is available from Words (PO Box 12441, Denver, Colo 80212) for \$4. The outfit promises to sharpen your tongue in French, German, Spanish, Russian and Swedish.

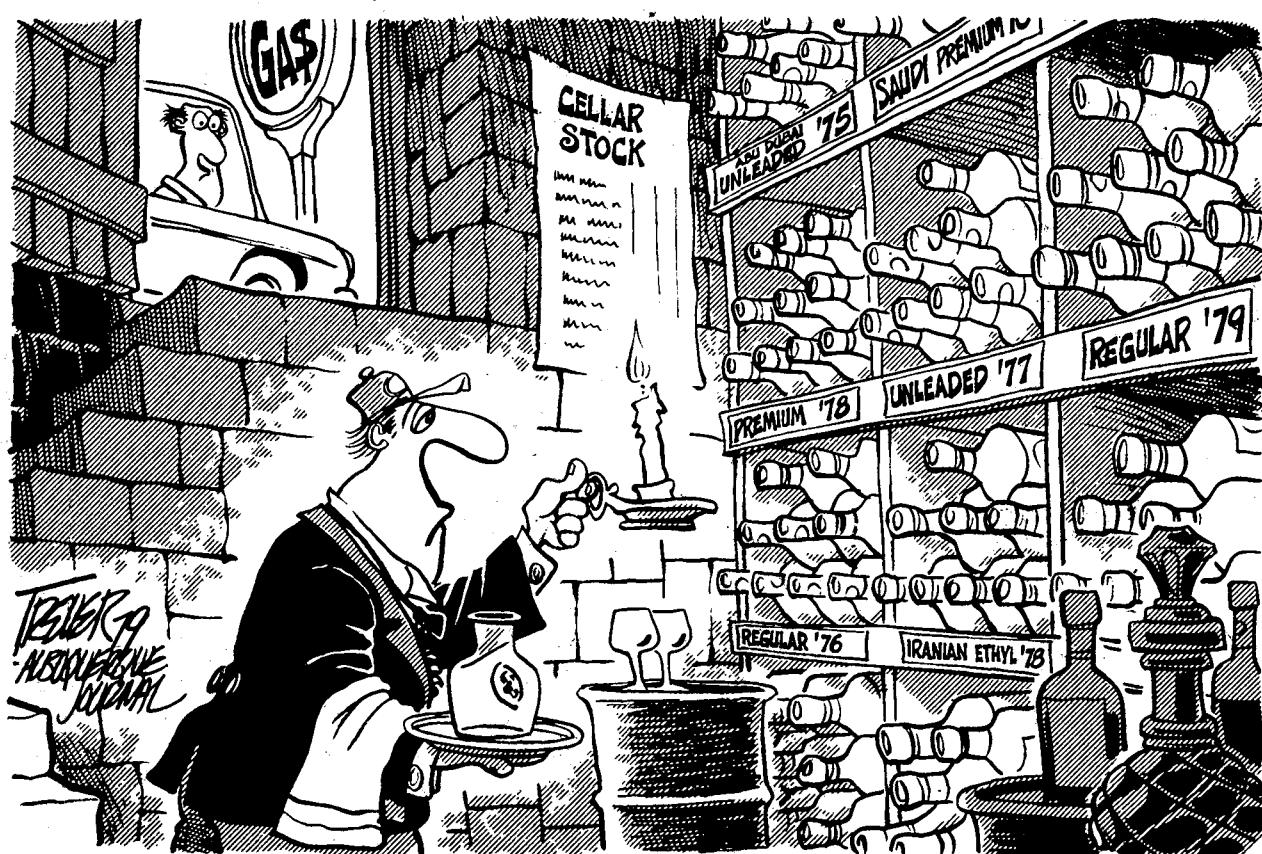
FOR A 121-page report on sunset laws, including bills pass in 29 states, write Common Cause, 2030 M NW, DC 20036.

NATIONAL PIRG is looking into the Educational Testing Service and is seeking people interested in building 'truth in testing' campaigns around the country. Write Ed Hanley, PO Box 19367, DC 20036.

JIM SMITH, ex of this rag and now, among other things, head of the Bicycle Commuters of New York, writes to report that he is off to Puerto Rico for a round-the-island bike tour: "On this trip I will not get any flat tires. This is not wishful thinking, but the truth. On Friday I received two 'airless' tires from Zeus (mfg. co., that is) and I have already put ten miles on them. They are made of some stretchable plastic, and they have an internal structure which simulates 100 lb. air pressure. The ride is somewhat bumpier than rubber, but still comfortable except that on such repetitive surfaces as cobblestones and the Brooklyn Bridge boardwalk. The immediate sensation is one of speed, since the tires have almost zero rolling resistance. They are available in black, but I ordered the bright yellow ones for the hell of it."

THE WOMEN'S BUREAU has published "A Working Woman's Guide to Job Rights." Single copies of the guide can be obtained from the Women's Bureau, US Department of Labor, DC 20210.

PHYSICIST ERNEST STERNGLASS, longtime critic of the country's radiation policies, claims that about a million people may have been exposed to up to 130 times more radiation than the government has admitted to — as a result of the Harrisburg nuclear accident. Dr. Sternglass, writing for Pacific News Service, says that the government failed to have proper instruments near Harrisburg to measure all the radiation which escaped. In addition, federal monitoring procedures fail to take into account the total radiation doses received by critical organs and bones following the inhalation of fission gasses. Dr. Sternglass contends that inhaled gasses can increase radiation exposure by a factor of 130 times. He says that some nearby residents may have received 10,000 millirems or exposure to their lungs — and not the 80 millirem doses estimated by the government. He figures that 300 to 2500 cases of cancer could eventually be triggered by the Pennsylvania accident.



A BOSTON-BASED group that calls itself Physicians for Social Responsibility is circulating a petition asking all US doctors to join together in calling for an end of nuclear proliferation.

The group issued a medical statement against nuclear power which cited health hazards posed by radiation and plutonium from nuclear power plants, the danger of nuclear weapons proliferation and the still unsolved problem of radioactive waste disposal. Three hundred doctors have already signed the petition.

REDSTOCKINGS, a New York feminist group is charging that Random House censored the reissue of its anthology, *Feminist Revolution*, following threats of libel suits and "objections by an array of powerful individuals and groups." One of the articles deleted was "Gloria Steinem and the CIA." For more information on this controversy write Redstockings, PO Box 413, New Platz, NY 12561.

DANIEL FORD, director of the Union of Concerned Scientists, warns that the next major nuclear accident in the US could be triggered by worker sabotage. In fact, according to Ford, a serious nuclear accident in Idaho that occurred 18 years ago — a mishap that killed three workers — seems to have been caused when one of the three workers decided to commit suicide.

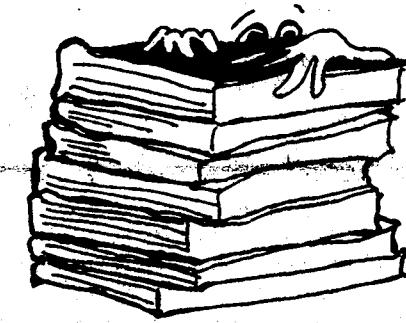
The mishap occurred when, for reasons never publicly explained, one of the three men in the control room yanked out a control rod from the core of the reactor.

In a fraction of a second, more than 60 billion neutrons hit every square inch of the control room, killing all three workers. The bodies were eventually turned over to their next of kin in sealed, lead-lined coffins with strict instructions that the coffins never be opened, because of radioactivity.

Ford believes the accident was caused by one of the workers committing suicide. He bases this belief on internal AEC reports and from discussions with other workers at the Idaho test facility.

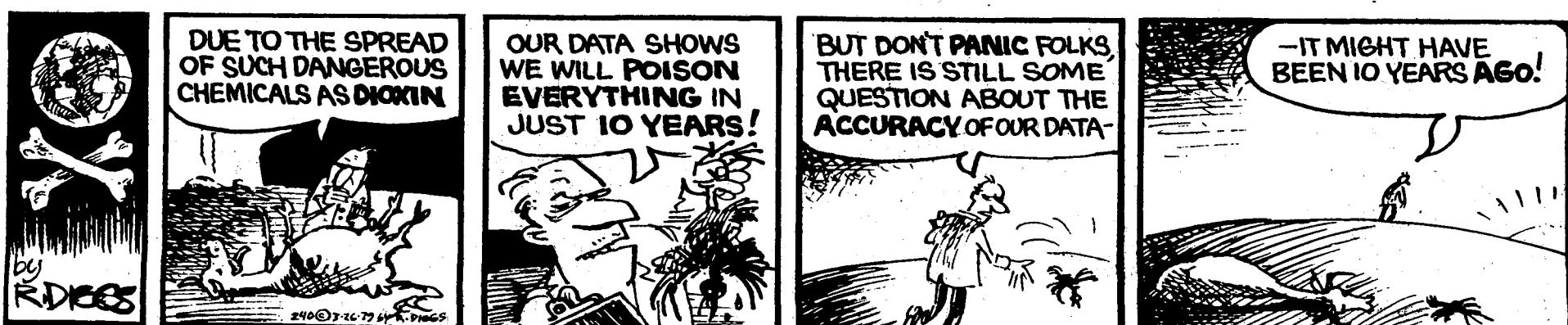
MEDIA CRITIC Ben Bagdikian says his studies show that only 20 corporations control 52 percent of all daily newspaper sales. In addition, only 167

corporate chains control 61 percent of all papers in the US and only 34 cities have competing newspapers. Further, 27 percent of all TV stations are controlled by newspaper companies and only 13 US corporations control what's seen by two-thirds of the TV and radio audience throughout the nation.



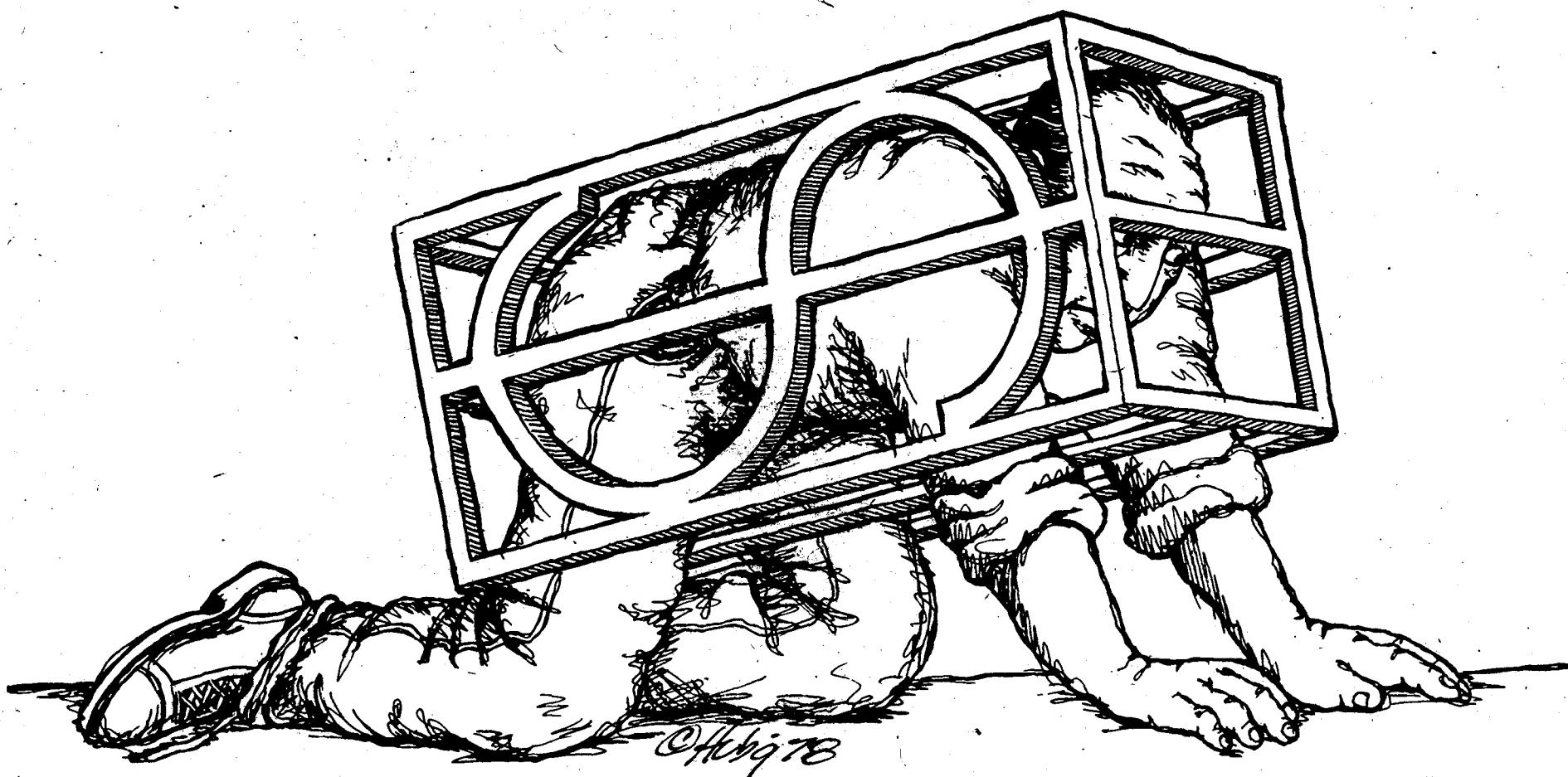
CANDIDATES backed by the Campaign for Economic Democracy have won city council and mayoral seats in four California communities. CED has been backing rent control and solar energy and opposing nuclear power.

A HAMBURG, West Germany, physician is using her duty as a doctor as a defense against a lawsuit over her refusal to pay that part of her electric bill earmarked for nuclear power generation. Dr. Eva Spiller, along with a group called No Nuclear Power With Our Money, has since November 1977 refused to pay ten percent of her electric bill. Now, the Hamburg Electric Company is calling the doctor into court in an effort to collect the 61 marks that she owes them. Spiller, however, is claiming that paying for the nuclear power would violate her duty as a physician. West German doctors pledge to preserve life, to protect and restore health, and through their care to keep human beings from harm. Spiller says this means that all doctors are bound to prevent the exposure of human beings to harmful radioactivity. Her stand is supported by 230 other physicians in the Hamburg area.



VAT: JUST ANOTHER SALES TAX

Anne G. Witte



Not so very long ago, some members of Richard Nixon's administration thought that they had stumbled on a cure for the country's tax problems. Their "discovery" was the value-added tax, or VAT—a form of national sales tax.

The tax, they noted, had extraordinary revenue-raising potential—then about five billion dollars for every tax rate percentage point. European countries, they observed further, used the tax extensively and with great success. VAT was "simple," it was "wide-based," and it was "neutral."

All of those apparently impressive adjectives notwithstanding, VAT never caught on. The administration talked of it, the newspapers wrote about it, and the experts discussed it. Finally, they all rejected it. The objections were persuasive: The value-added tax was not only regressive, it would also be administratively burdensome, and highly inflationary. Besides, the states, which raise almost half of their revenue through their sales taxes, would certainly object if the federal government tried to impose its own.

But memories are short, apparently, and now the tax is finding new support. Two of its more notable advocates, Senate Finance and House Ways and Means chairman Russell Long and Al Ullman, are promoting it as a possible partial replacement for the corporate income tax, the payroll tax, or both. Business, especially keen on the idea of lower corporate income taxes, thinks VAT could do wonders for the economy.

The "good for the economy" argument is particularly interesting since most experts agree, as they did the last time they rejected VAT, that the tax would push prices upward and therefore contribute substantially to inflation—certainly not a desirable effect, by almost anyone's standards. VAT is indirect—the taxpayer isn't really aware of the tax, so it is less obnoxious than, say, the more visible property or income taxes. In fact, when VAT was proposed in the Nixon administration, it was discussed as a possible alternative to the property tax, which was not only very unpopular but was also being questioned in courts as a legitimate way to finance public schooling. Now VAT is talked of as a substitute for the payroll tax, which, of course, is visible to anyone who looks at his or her payroll stub to see how much is taken out each pay period.

Most people concerned with tax fairness insist that taxes *should* be out front, so that the taxpayer knows just how much he or she is paying. But in "invisibility," the value-added tax tops even the conventional sales tax. Unlike the retail

sales tax, which is levied on the final value of a product when it is sold (if a widget costs \$10.00 and the sales tax rate is 5%, the tax is 50 cents, payable by the consumer), VAT is applied to the *value added* to the product at each stage of production. Thus, the manufacturer of the widget pays a 5% tax on the value he or she adds to the raw material by turning it into a widget; the packager pays 5% on the value added through packaging; and so on, through the wholesaler to the consumer.

Not So Neutral After All

The tax clearly is passed on from the seller to the buyer at each stage, either through higher prices or, in some countries, even on a separate bill. For the consumer, then, the result is the same: a \$10 widget with a 50 cent tax, or a \$10.50 widget with the tax built into it.

Because the tax is levied on every product, at every stage of production, it is known and applauded by business as a "neutral" tax (as opposed to taxes which ostensibly favor one type of business or transaction over another). Since the tax is passed on to the consumer, though, others point out that of course the tax is neutral regarding *business*. But it is hardly neutral in its impact on different income groups of consumers. As with any other flat rate tax, its impact is regressive: Lower income people tend to spend more on items subject to the tax.

Some supporters of VAT claim that the regressivity could be countered by exempting food or other necessities from the tax, much the way necessities are sometimes exempt from state sales taxes, or by providing a credit or rebate system for low income taxpayers. The latter suggestion, however, would ease regressivity only for the eligible income levels; for taxpayers with incomes above the eligibility point the tax would again be regressive. And either system of exemptions or credits would make the tax more complex—undoing what for most people is the only point VAT has in its favor, its apparent simplicity. Of course, as the widget example above shows, the multi-stepped value-added tax is already far more complicated than the retail sales tax, which prompts some observers to point out that VAT—with or without exemptions and credits—combines the worst feature of the sales tax, its regressivity, with the worst of our current loophole-ridden income tax, its complexity.

That unfelicitous combination of regressivity and complexity should be reason enough for rejecting VAT. But the supporters of the tax appar-

ently don't object to its complexity; otherwise they would opt for the inherently simpler retail sales tax.

Taxing Savings Vs. Taxing Consumption

VAT's regressivity apparently doesn't bother its supporters, either—except for the minority of them who would like to partially offset it with credits (and since they are a minority, it is unlikely that they would be successful in getting those credits enacted). In fact, it seems that most VAT proponents are perfectly willing to sacrifice fairness for what they see as the tax's "economic" benefits—benefits that are based on a debatable theory of what should and shouldn't be taxed in an ideal system.

Our current income and payroll tax systems, they complain, are biased in favor of spending over saving. If one uses money to buy a house, or a refrigerator, or a book, the argument goes, the *benefits* from the purchase—the shelter or convenience or pleasure, whatever—are not taxed. If, on the other hand, one chooses to save the money, the income in interest or dividends is taxed, which, in short, amounts to a disincentive to save. Furthermore (and this is where the argument makes its widest and most dubious leap of faith), a saving shortage is responsible for our economic woes. Without saving there is no investment in those things, like research and new machines, that enhance productivity. To tax *spending*, then, as the value-added tax would, would be a step toward encouraging saving and helping to perk up the sluggish economy.

As it happens, however, a lack of saving is not the key to our economic difficulties. In fact, the level of saving has been remarkably stable over the past thirty years, and investment in the more secure, inflation-proof areas like real estate is at a record high. If investment in other areas is low, it isn't for a lack of available funds, but because inflation and economic uncertainty (not taxes) discourage it.

Not to tax savings, then, would do little to improve the economy (and, as mentioned before, would exacerbate inflation). At the same time, any step in that direction—including adopting the value-added tax—would do considerable damage to the concept of basing taxes on a person's ability to pay them. One wonders whether that isn't what the VAT proponents had in mind all along.

From People & Taxes, the journal of the Tax Reform Research Group, PO Box 14198, DC 20044.

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

What's a Humanities?

I HAVE TO CONFESS something. I have strayed from the civic abstinence I promised on these pages a while back. I have once again joined a committee. But it's just a small committee and I think I can handle it. If not, drive me home and I'll never do it again. Promise.

The committee is called the DC Community Humanities Council. Fifty states and Puerto Rico have such committees — and the funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities that follow in their wake — but DC, through a combination of federal inertia and local indifference, has been years late to the gate. This means the city is missing out on about \$300,000 annually in an area in which \$300,000 in federal money still goes a long way.

I was invited to serve on the committee by the NEH for reasons that are not entirely clear, but which presumably have something to do with what is known in the trade as "community outreach," or, as Scoop Jackson put it even less felicitously the other day, providing another "rung on the spectrum." I had complained in print about the lack of a local humanities committee so I thought I ought to put some time where my mouth was. But there was another less honorable reason for my willingness to accept the invitation. You see, what the folks at NEH don't know is that not only did I graduate from college magna cum probation but I was so indifferent to the humanities and scholarship in general that my English instructor once sent me a neatly written card that read: "Mr. Coles requests the pleasure of your attendance at the next regular meeting of his course."

Many of the courses I did attend left me thoroughly befuddled. The first hint that joining the fellowship of educated men was going to be a treacherous business came when I returned to my room after the initial day of classes. I settled down to dash off a bit of Max Weber before supper. Ten pages in my heart went into a barrel roll and my hands began to rattle. I hadn't understood one word the man was saying. This exquisite form of panic would return many times over the next four years.

I struggled to separate the thoughts of Locke from the sermons of Cotton Mather; Veblin and Bentham congealed in my brain; Karl Marx was, as far as I could discern, the opiate of sadistic professors; and when I walked into an examination hall I was certain that all around me could balance more philosophers within the margins of a blue book than I. The die was cast early as one of my anthropology professors noted on a paper. "This is pretty good journalism," she wrote of my painfully conceived review of the Naga situation, "but it is bad anthropology."

I left the ivy bedizened halls vowing never to return and, in fact, never did except for an occasional guest talk to the class of a professor or two of eccentric tastes. So for me to be invited to share responsibility for the fate of the humanities with genuine, certified, dissertationing scholars was too good an offer to pass up — not unlike an ex-con being asked to serve on a judicial nominations commission.

So of course I accepted. This first thing that happened was a friend, to whom I had talked of the project, described herself as "one of nine people in the city who knows what the humanities are." I passed on the remark to an historian who asked, "Don't you think that figure is a little high?"

Right away I knew I was in trouble. One of the real pleasures of graduating from college is that seldom thereafter does anyone ask you to define your terms. I had been away from the academic world for twenty years and I had sort of assumed that in the interim they had come up with handy definitions for things like the "humanities." But apparently we were heading for ground zero — back to Humanities 10: "Define the humanities and illustrate by example, citing sources where applicable."

It all came back. The slush of ideas, concepts, symbolisms, metaphors, imagery, and philosophies through which I had so laboriously slogged during college, and so assiduously avoided since, was underfoot once more and I could feel my socks getting wet and clammy.

I had voluntarily agreed to serve a cause whose meaning and purpose I thought I understood, but which I couldn't decently explain to anyone who didn't understand. I had done so somewhat whimsically and capriciously, in part because I sensed it all had something to do with constructive irrelevance, a subject which has interested me of late after years of excessive relevance and the not totally satisfying product of the same. It also seemed to favor my anarchistic side, since the humanities like to ask questions without answers while politics tends to provide answers without asking questions. Further, humanists have a reputation for not doing anything useful, so perhaps if I became as-

sociated with them, people would stop asking me to do things that were useful.

But that would hardly do when we had to get out and explain what we were about and why anyone should be interested. You can't tell a sullen scribe from one of the dailies who asks "What do you see as the role of the humanities in this city?" something like, "If you have to ask, you'll never know." So I decided I better find out what a humanities really was before the National Endowment blew my cover and decided that this community outreach business had gone far enough.

Here is some of what I found:

The word *humanities* doesn't mean much to most people. Most people to whom it does mean much work on college campuses. For them it means pretty much what it did when I was in college: it's what you major in if you're not in the physical or social sciences, haven't decided what to do with your life or want to go to law school but would like to learn something first.

Here are some of the humanities: philosophy, comparative religion, history, ethics, literature.

Here is one thing the humanities have in common: you feel a little foolish listing them on a job application form.

That may be one reason that most people who know about the humanities are found on college campuses: no one else will hire them.

There's another reason: Some people on campus feel that the humanities shouldn't be talked about too much off campus. They feel the humanities are a profession and that you should have a Ph.D. to be "in" them. They want people to treat them like physicians and lawyers and CPAs and lieutenant colonels, so they call each other Doctor a lot.

This is confusing because there are many kinds of doctors. Groucho Marx once walked into a party with a friend who was a doctor, introduced him as such and then added quickly: "Don't get up; he's only a dentist."

It is also confusing because it suggests that you might need a license to think about literature, religion, history or philosophy. This is not necessarily true.

It is also confusing because humanities scholars, when they're not calling themselves Doctor, call themselves "humanists." Off campus, the word has a different meaning. The woman down the street may be considered a humanist because she set up a senior citizen center and organized the heart drive, even though she doesn't know who Kierkegaard was. You can't be a humanist on campus without knowing who Kierkegaard was, no matter how much you raise for the heart fund.

Finally, it is confusing because in many people's minds, a doctor is meant to fix something. Humanist-type doctors are hard-pressed to prove that they do. And in our scientific and technological society, we tend to discount the unprovable. There is no morality program you can slip into the computer, no antibiotic against cultural vacuity, no certifiable benefits to be achieved through an acquaintance with the past and no minimum daily requirement for literature.

I think a part of what the National Endowment for the Humanities is trying to do is to end some of this confusion. This is good because even though the word "humanities" is not used that much off campus, we use what it describes all the time. We just don't have a name for it.

We practice it without a license and without credit. Some of the biggest issues of our lives are concerns of the humanities. Like whether we accept a politician's definition of "acceptable risk" at, say, a nuclear power plant. Like publicly funded abortions or legalized gambling or how we distribute political power.

These are also political questions and their philosophical, historical or religious core often gets hidden behind the politics, which is too bad because good politics is a poor substitute for a good philosophy, but good philosophy can make good politics.

Our best presidents, for example, were those who convinced people, not just of their politics but of its philosophical or ethical base. The New Deal, the War on Poverty, the civil rights legislation and the Peace Corps would never have gotten off the ground if people hadn't accepted the philosophy before the politics. And when Jimmy Carter tried to float his "New Foundation," it didn't work, partially I suspect because people thought it was politics without philosophy.

We need, Martin Marty said, a place from which to view the world. The media and the merchandisers would like us to think otherwise. They want us to acquiesce in their plan to create packaged consumers for their packaged products — whether it be artificial eggs, a new TV series or a president. They would like us to want more than to be. The thing that keeps us in rebellion is a part of what the humanities are about.

This is the revolutionary aspect of the National Endowment for the Humanities. It proposes to fund the dangerous notion that we can still think for ourselves. That we still want to know why we do things

THE GAZETTE BOOKSHELF

COOKING

- WHAT'S COOKING DOWN EAST:** This is the book that taught your editor how to make the best fish chowder in town. Lots of other Down East recipes. \$1.50.
- BACH'S LUNCH: PICNIC AND PATIO CLASSICS:** We discovered this book through a friend who recommended it highly. 200 recipes for picnics and patio dining. \$3.25 and worth it.
- COOKING UNDER PRESSURE:** Says the Washington Star: "It delivers on the promise, cutting through the mystique of pressure cooking with an intelligent introduction, complete list of do's and don'ts, cooking times and more than 50 recipes. \$1.95
- THE NEW YORK TIMES NATURAL FOODS COOKBOOK:** Over 700 recipes for those who care what they eat. \$2.25
- JOY OF COOKING:** Best selling US cookbook. 4300 recipes. \$4.95
- VEGETARIAN EPICURE:** \$4.95
- EATING IN AMERICA:** Dietary goals of the US; the report of the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. \$1.95
- THE TAMING OF THE CANDY MONSTER:** A cookbook to help get your kids to eat less sugary, salty, junk food, without sacrificing convenience or good taste. \$3.95
- THE WHOLE KITCHEN CATALOG:** A guide by the editors of Consumer's Reports to creating a more beautiful, comfortable and convenient kitchen. \$7.95.
- BUSY PEOPLE'S DECIDEDLY DELICIOUS FAST FOODBOOK:** Any meal sandwiches, blander quenchers, one-pan plans, refrigerator readies and more. Simple but tasty recipes. \$4.95

REFERENCE

- THE NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE DICTIONARY:** More than 40,000 entries. Synonyms arranged by word length alphabetically. Many other important features. \$5.95.
- THE NEW ROGET'S THESAURUS IN DICTIONARY FORM:** Brighten up your language, find that word you can't think of. \$1.50
- ALTERNATIVE AMERICA** A directory of 5000 alternative lifestyle organizations around the country. \$20.00
- DICTIONARY OF LAW:** More than 1800 law terms explained in simple language. \$2.95.

GARDENING

- KEEPING THE HARVEST:** Home storage of vegetables and fruits. So you've grown all those tomatoes. This book tells you what to do with them. List \$5.95. Our price: \$4.16.
- NEW YORK TIMES BOOK OF HOUSE PLANTS:** The NYT gives you the way to keep the inside of your house green. \$4.75 (80¢ off the list price).

ENERGY

- YOUR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOUSE: BUILDING AND REMODELING IDEAS.** Here is the homeowner's manual to drastically reducing fuel bills by not wasting the free energy around you. \$4.95

TO: DC GAZETTE, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW, DC 20009

Please send the following items. I enclose check or money order.

ITEM	PRICE
TOTAL	
5% TAX (DC only)	
POSTAGE & HANDLING	40¢
PAY THIS AMOUNT	

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
ZIP.....

() Check here if you are not a subscriber and we'll send you a free trial subscription with your order.

THE SOLAR HOME BOOK: The first book to deal honestly with the drawbacks and blessings of home solar heating and cooling. Simple yet complete, with a wealth of photos, drawings and diagrams. \$7.50

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY SOURCEBOOK: Written specifically with non-experts in mind, this sourcebook identifies the existing small-scale technology. Dozens of tools, books and techniques for food production, home construction, health care, energy sources, etc., are outlined and reviewed. \$4.

WAGE THE ENERGY WAR AT HOME: A well-illustrated, easy-to-understand guide to improving the energy efficiency of your house. By Joseph C. Davis and Claxton Walker. \$9.95

WASHINGTON

STATEHOOD T-SHIRT: Light blue with dark blue lettering. Reads "End Capital Punishment. Support DC Statehood" with "DC Gazette" in small letters below. State size. \$4.75

STATEHOOD BUMPER STICKER: Same legend as above \$2.50

HOW TO GET A DIVORCE (DC Area): The Washingtonian's guide to the local divorce laws. Includes sample forms for filing your own divorce. \$4.95

WASHINGTON'S MOST FAMOUS MURDER STORIES: Tom Kelly's collection of tales of some of Washington's most famous murder stories. Well illustrated. \$3.95

NON-SMOKERS GUIDE TO WASHINGTON: How to get around town without coughing. \$1.50

GOING PLACES WITH CHILDREN: Green Acire School's Guide to planning successful trips in the area with children. 20% off at \$2.

SURVIVAL DIRECTORY FOR WOMEN: Listing sources for help in everything from child care and education to groceries and "Karma cleaning." \$3.00

CAPTIVE CAPITAL: Sam Smith tells the story of non-federal Washington. "Not only well worth reading, but it is the best book we are likely to read on Washington." — Bryce Nelson, LA Times. "An excellent gift," — Bill Raspberry in the Washington Post. "Must reading" — Afro American. "A joy to read" — Robert Cassidy in the Chicago Tribune. \$10.

BOSS SHEPHERD AND THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS: The fascinating tale of DC's only true boss and perhaps the most controversial figure in local history. \$3.

THE POTOMAC: Frederick Gutheim's fine book on the history of the Potomac River Valley will broaden your understanding of the area. 20% off at \$3.96

YESTERDAY'S WASHINGTON: A photographic history of our city that all lovers of DC will want to have. 20% off at \$7.95

JOHN WIEBENSON'S MAP OF WASHINGTON: Drawn for the bicentennial and now available at 40% off \$1.50

FACTORY OUTLET GUIDE TO DC., MD AND VA. How to get things cheaply around here. \$2.95

ZOO BOOK: Photo-filled book on what's in the National Zoo and how it's cared for. 40% off at \$3.

TOWPATH GUIDE TO THE C&O: Georgetown-Seneca. \$3. C&O OLD PICTURE ALBUM \$4.95

GREATER WASHINGTON AREA BIKE ATLAS: This guide is now in its second edition and is a must for anyone who likes to take bike trips in the area. 20% off at \$2.80

I FEEL I SHOULD WARN YOU: A very funny collection of cartoons about urban planning and preservation issues, culled from national publications. \$4.

THE BEST OF WASHINGTON: Where to eat; walk through history; take children to happy places; find the best shops; go out on the town; get away for the weekend. \$2.50

as well as when and how much it will cost. That we still have some choices left.

There may not be that much time. Already, Carl Sandburg's words in "The People, Yes," seem a little dated:

*Over the margins of animal necessity,
Over the grim line of sheer subsistence
Then man came....*

To the time for thinking things over.

Part of our day's distemper stems, perhaps from the fear that the time of which Carl Sandburg spoke was only a moment and it passed us by.

People like politicians and social activists and corporate vice presidents and reporters seldom take time to think things over. They are prisoners of what's happening now. Rod French, a scholar at George Washington University who happens to be both an academic and non-academic humanist, said it rather well:

Humanists... speak for the missing generations, those deceased and those yet to be born. We all know that our political processes are ruthlessly present oriented. Indeed, the better a government, the faster it responds to present interests. Hopefully, however, the virtue of the responsiveness of democracy to the interests of the present generation does not condemn us to an existence in one temporal dimension. The humanities promise an imaginative liberation from the tyranny of presentism.

Sec. 320 USC 952 puts it a bit more blandly: "As used in this act — (a) the term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism, theory and practice of the arts; those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."

Whatever a humanities is, it used to be different. Rod French described it this way in a paper prepared for the National League of Cities:

At the opening of the modern age, in the city states of Italy in the 14th and 15th centuries, humanist scholars and poets handled state correspondence, represented their sovereigns as diplomatic emissaries and wrote orations for great civic occasions. But already in the 16th century, this whole class of scholars began a long decline into disgrace and neglect. Their ambition and poor judgement was responsible in part, but they were also the victims of deep social changes. The rise of the middle class and the democratic revolutions of the 18th century further displaced humanists from positions of influence. And then industrialization placed a premium on a set of new skills. Those who persisted in studying the humanities were forced to the margins of public life....

In the Renaissance, the term humanist referred to men (almost exclusively) who dedicated themselves to the study of the humanities. That happened to mean to them the study of the literature and history and politics and ethics and art of classical Greece and Rome.

Today, hardly anyone in public life feels they need a humanist and few humanists feel they need a public life. Says French, "The only way to get the humanist down from the ivory tower is to drag him into public affairs. If his alleged contribution proves in actual experience to be trivial or ephemeral, then the game is up. If the managers of society refuse even to give his questions a hearing then we can conclude fairly that they are not really friends of the good society."

Here is one more historical note: Tocqueville called the French Revolution the first great event in history brought about by men of letters. The Russian Revolution was another. So, as late as this century, some humanists have been found relevant.

The National Endowment for the Humanities says that all programs funded by state humanities committees should have "scholars involved centrally." Artists can get money from their National Endowment without scholars being centrally involved in their sculpture or dance.

Governments are more leery of unformed ideas than they are of unformed stone, which may be why federally funded thinking must be accompanied by licensed personnel. I think humanities scholars should have to prove their ideas are worth something, just like anyone else, but they're on the dole far less than most groups, there isn't much risk that they will turn into a mandarin class in the near future, and they need the money, so what the hell. You can always pull the anchovies off the pizza if you don't like them.

I'm getting into touchy territory. I gather there's been some sort of debate about the direction of the government's humanities' programs. It's genteelly phrased as a conflict between elitism and populism.

Here is what Joan Mondale had to say about it recently at a symposium on government and the humanities:

If 'elitism' means that we must nourish excellence and cherish creativity, then I am an elitist. If 'populism' means expanding access, then I am a populist. ... We must strive at once toward the twin goals of quality and equality, and we must stave off the twin catastrophes of arrogance and philistinism.

As a 'public' (populist? philistine?) member of a humanities committee, Ms. Mondale's on-the-one-hand-this-on-the-other-hand-that strikes me as quite revealing. Here, in easy-to-read tabular form, are some dichotomies garnered from her talk:

ELITIST QUALITIES	POPULIST QUALITIES
Excellence/Creativity	Access
Merit	Fairness
Refusal to compromise standards	Extension of number who are served
Quality	Equality
Arrogance	Philistinism

Now change the headings to their generic meanings: Academic Goals and Qualities and Public Goals and Qualities. The lists become disturbing. Is it not just possible that the public, as well as the academics, might wish, and be able, to take some from column A and some from Column B? Even humanists don't ask all the questions.

One of the problems with defining the humanities is that it is hard to do anything well without them. A doctor or a nuclear physicist who isn't also a humanist can cause a lot of trouble.

One of the purposes of the humanities is to give some direction to the other things we do. The humanities are often at their most potent when they modify something else rather than being just an end.

Of course, you don't have to justify interest in the humanities on the basis of social utility. After all, the Declaration of Independence ranked the pursuit of happiness after only life and liberty as a basic right. It hasn't fared so well since. The humanities, among other things, have to do with the pursuit of happiness. As Hubert Humphrey said when the bill establishing the National Endowment passed: "At last the Congress voted for fun, at last the Congress voted and said let's have something that celebrates the rights of man to sheer fun."

But, then again, we may be too late. Newsweek seems to think so. It ran a headline over a book review recently that read: "Albert Camus: The Last of the Humanists." I hope not.

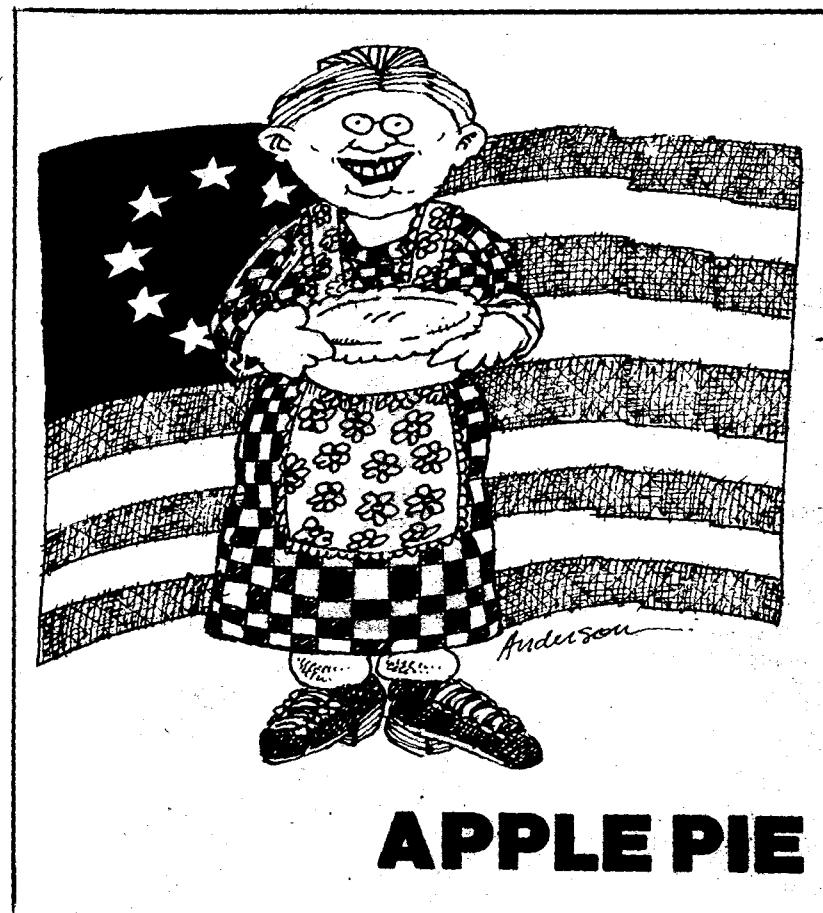
You can see it's not a very exact business. It pretty much depends on whom you talk to. John Locke thought that one day morality, which is one of the concerns of the humanities, might become one of "the sciences capable of demonstration; wherein I doubt not but from self-evident propositions, by necessary consequences as incontestable as those in mathematics, the measure of right and wrong might be made out."

While we're waiting for that day of questionable morality and certain boredom, it's probably worthwhile for a city with a budget of over a billion dollars to spend \$300,000 on something that only our souls say is cost-effective. To turn around the philosophy of one of our eminent local automotive dealers, we're not talking cars, we're not talking the largest showroom on the east coast, we're talking values.

So what's a humanities? I can't really give you one answer. But I can give you several. It's asking why before we say yes. It's remembering something someone wrote two centuries ago when we can't remember what we wrote yesterday. It's mistakes we don't have to make because they've already been made and solutions we don't have to dream up because someone has already thought of them. It's how we got where we are and where we might go from here. It's things we can't measure yet know have depth and breadth. It's parts of our culture we might lose like the Indian tribe writing its language down and putting it in a book. It's parts of our culture that we're often slow to recognize as such, like the legislature in Albany finally making "Georgia on My Mind" the state song and inviting Ray Charles to come down and sing it. It's the moral, philosophical and historical issues hidden behind the political babble. It's rights and beliefs and their protection. It's preserving the past and the future as well as exploiting today. It's thinking as well as talking, questioning as well as answering. And it's placing human values and culture at the center of our world and making machines and technology and Channel Seven serve us rather than the other way around.

If we talk about things like these, we'll be talking humanities whether we know it or not. And I think we'll be reminded that they really do matter. And have all along.

-SAM SMITH



A WISCONSIN lawsuit alleges that during a "greeting of peace" at St. Jerome's Church in Columbus, one William Schleicher "did willfully, wantonly, with malice intent and great force so grasp and seize" the right hand of Catherine Fritz that she now wants \$100,000 in damages.

A RECENT issue of Seven Days Magazine arrived on the newsstands one week late because of an article, "How to Make Your Own H-Bomb." The US Attorney's office received a phone call from a camera stripper before the article went to press, and an excited assistant US Attorney apparently advised the worker not to handle the article because of possible "national security" violations. Seven Days delayed publication until it could find a new stripper.

The article told readers in cook-book fashion how to use ordinary cooking utensils to make a bomb in their own kitchen and how to dump the wastes in their back yard. To all except a camera stripper and an assistant US Attorney, it was a spoof. Seven Days now plans to sue the government for the delay.

SORRY, but a food scientist at the University of Kentucky reports that ordinary black pepper causes cancer in laboratory mice. Dr. Jose Madrid Concon says he has completely cut out pepper from his diet. He adds that people over 40 probably shouldn't worry about pepper because "it's too late anyway."

HERE'S some cheerful news from the wonderful world of music. Disco is not taking the record industry by storm. In fact, according to the National Association of Recording Manufacturers, disco records accounted for only nine percent of last year's sales, putting them behind rock (42%), pop music (13%) and country music (10%).

KATHERINE AND Moses Attrep, two professors at East Texas State University, report they have discovered the existence of a compound in onions similar to Prostaglandin A-1, a substance used in treating high blood pressure. The researchers say their discovery shows that "onions are definitely useful for blood pressure control."

TOWN AND COUNTRY Magazine reports that none of Fortune's top 100 executives own a cat. Suggests the magazine: "For the highly organized person, trained always to be in command of facts, a cat is an anathema. You can not control a cat."

AND WHILE we're on the subject, word is that we just narrowly escaped a Morris-the-Catgate. According to the Wall Street Journal, the death of the famous TV cat was withheld from the press while executives of the H. J. Heinz Corporation discussed whether to suppress the news while switching over to a look-alike. Morris's death was eventually announced after it was decided that news of a cover-up could have negative consequences on the sale of the late feline's favorite food.

WILLIE NELSON and his band apparently didn't have to give up any of their pot-smoking when they performed at the White House last summer. The Berkeley Barb reports that when Nelson was asked

recently whether he smoked marijuana at the White House he "laughed and laughed" and answered, "The boys don't play where they don't smoke dope." According to the Barb, Willie said the presidential staff had arranged to accommodate their taste by having the Secret Service place big fans in front of the stage which blew the pot smoke back over the Rose Garden.

RONALD REAGAN'S radio commentary was aired in the Harrisburg area just fifteen minutes after a news broadcast urged all pregnant women and pre-school children to evacuate a five mile radius around Three Mile Island. The commentary, taped several weeks in advance, included Reagan's assurance that the odds of a nuclear plant meltdown was "one in a billion reactor years." That meant, according to Ronnie, that even if all electric power in the country came from nuclear plants, you'd only get a meltdown once every 30,000 years.



And now the Weather Report... .

FREE!

IF YOU LIVE outside Washington, DC, and would like a free trial subscription to THE WEATHER REPORT, just fill out the form below and send it to us.

IF YOU KNOW someone who lives outside DC who would enjoy THE WEATHER REPORT let us know their names and we'll send them a free trial subscription.

(Sorry; offer not good to DC residents. Subscribe to the DC Gazette and you'll get THE WEATHER REPORT in each issue.)

THE WEATHER REPORT is published by the DC Gazette, one of America's oldest alternative papers. It's designed for people who would enjoy some of our regular features (Action Notes, Apple Pie, Flotsam & Jetsam etc.) but don't give a hang about local DC news. Low on rhetoric and redundancy, high on information and entertainment, THE WEATHER REPORT may be just the thing to improve the quality of your mail. Try it.

THE WEATHER REPORT
c/o DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW DC 20009

Please send me a free trial subscription:

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
ZIP.....

Please send a free trial subscription to:

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
ZIP.....

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
ZIP.....

Include your name and we'll tell them who thought up this great idea.....

FOUND ART: THE AESTHETICS OF UPC

THE UPC has just about taken over my kitchen by now. Only a few ancient relics — a jar of Bovril, a bottle of Tabasco sauce, some unopened plastic gloves — stand in mute, dusty defiance of the new order. The UPC, of course, is the Universal Product Code, that badge of thick and thin lines on everything in the supermarket, the computer's most recent reminder that 1984 is only four and a half years away. If some government bureaucracy had ordered Nabisco or Campbell's to use the Universal Product Code, there would have been lawsuits and full-page advertisements, hundreds of pinstripers would have clogged the air shuttle to Washington, thousands of workers would have been threatened with lay-offs, and ultimately the negotiators would have reached a settlement calling for a gradual phase-in of the symbol by 1990 in return for substantial tax advantages. But since the idea was cooked up by some zealous IBM salesman someplace, it took only 16 days to reach California.

In my market they had planned to eliminate the individual stick-on price labels and rely only on the UPC grid, but a neighborhood uprising soon scotched that idea. So now every product has its old-fashioned price tag and that sullen, mysterious UPC. My store hasn't installed those new beeping, scanning registers they have in the suburbs, so the UPC seems even more bizarre — useless, like pictures of brand new empty jail cells waiting for the overthrow of the old rulers.

The UPC is sort of like a Dewey Decimal System for the A&P. Danon Yogurt? That's prefix 15700. (The suffix for vanilla is 80501. Apricot's is 80507. Blueberry's 80509. Apparently, they are holding 80508 for some future flavor.) Kraft? Check the 21000's. Borden? 53000. You've been wondering why Jell-O and Post Fruity Pebbles both have the same prefix, 43000? Because they're both made by General Foods. How is Betty Crocker like a box of Cheerios? They both start with 16000 and they both come from General Mills.

Even though some automaton somewhere decreed the rigid shape of the UPC, and some giant roulette wheel assigned numbers to each company, it turns out that the package designers still have freedom over the color and location of the symbol on their products. (It's not much but we do still have four and a half years left.) In UPC-Land there are different schools of thought on design. The Schweppes Tonic people, for instance, run the stripes vertically, on the left side of the label, in a bold yellow-and-black color scheme. Canada Dry's philosophy couldn't be more different: its tonic has horizontal stripes

DR. JAMES FIX of the University of Nebraska reports that tests on volunteer smokers have found that after five weeks of taking about four grams of bicarbonate of soda each day, cigarette smokers dramatically reduced their consumption of cigarettes or were able to quit entirely.

Dr. Fix told Science News that the cure seems to work because high levels of acid in the body apparently cause smokers to crave nicotine. The sodium bicarbonate lowers these acid levels, and therefore reduces the craving.

Sodium bicarbonate might not be the only substance that works; spinach greens, beets or other alkalizing foods might have an even more profound anti-smoking effect than do four grams of bicarb of soda.

A NEW ORGANIZATION for women called Women USA has been formed in Washington. Bella Abzug, Yvonne Braithwaite Burke and Patsy Mink say the new organization is a response to the "rising mood of militancy" among women that needs a voice in the capital.

The group will challenge budget cuts in programs that affect women's rights.

GORDON BENNETT & associates is manufacturing a dust (made of 42 secret ingredients) to sprinkle on wine bottles so customers will think they are old.... Another outfit is marketing artificial aromas to bakeries and pizza joints. It comes in a spray can.



WORDS TO LIVE BY

I thought it was a beautifully benign treatment of a malignant era. — Zbigniew Brzezinski on the movie version of "Hair."

We must reunite together again — Senator Edward Kennedy

The Shah of Iran has been a friend of the United States for 37 years... and I think he should be granted political asylum here... He has helped us in many ways... including the battle in Vietnam — Henry Kissinger

It was needless to go up there. It's a long day and we couldn't afford to get pie all over our clothes. — Massachusetts governor Edward King, a supporter of nuclear power and higher legal drinking ages, explaining why he cancelled a scheduled speaking engagement at the University of Massachusetts.

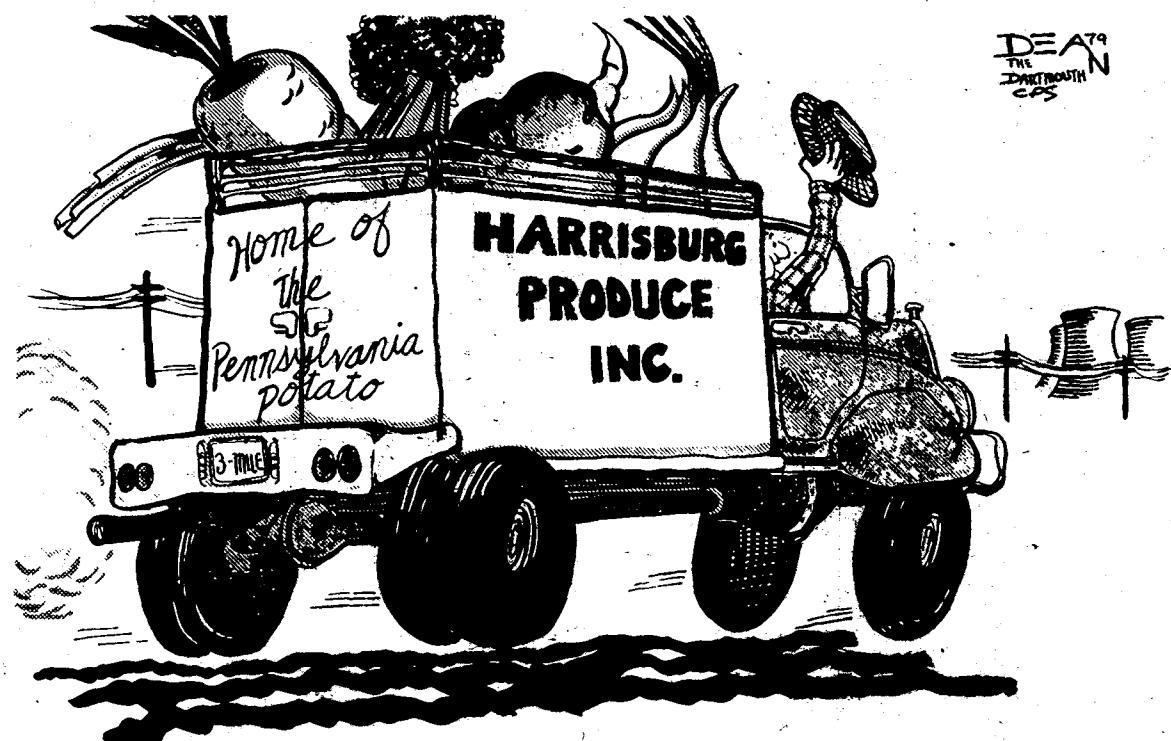
on the right side, green on white. Wonder Bread gets high marks for putting the symbol smartly in the center of one of its wrapper's red balloons. The Thomas' designers, on the other hand, seem to be using the UPC to send a message to consumers: on the bottom of their box of English muffins, the stripes are just to the left of their coach-and-four logo. Any psychologist will tell you that, subliminally, the carriage and horses are fleeing an approaching rainstorm, presumably to bring you your muffins fresh and dry. The Constant Comment tea tin has a large UPC right under the phrase "Satisfaction fully guaranteed," suggesting that if you complain, your body might be broken on a metal rack. The award for most clever UPC location goes to Armour Golden Star Canned Ham which placed it smack in the middle of the "zip top" finger ring on the lid.

But the relish shelf demonstrates most dramatically the extremes of UPC design. In first place, with 97½ points out of a possible 100, is Heinz's India Relish, exhibiting black-and-brown UPC stripes tastefully and unobtrusively arranged on a brown wood-grain background. Sadly, just two feet away stands Del Monte's Sweet Pickle Relish with green stripes on a hideous yellow background, which itself was mercilessly cut out of the predominantly green label.

Still, Del Monte doesn't lose. At the absolute bottom of the barrel is the entire magazine industry which has also adopted the UPC for its newsstand copies. Unlike most food packagers who hid the unattractive symbol on the bottom, back or side of their boxes, cans or jars, the magazines inexplicably exhibit the ugly gashes right on their front covers. While Domino Brown Sugar, with one of the least exciting box designs in America today, buries its UPC on its underside, Time, Esquire, Cosmo and all the others, which spend thousands of dollars each week achieving that perfect sensory combination to attract the consumer's fickle eyes, display their computer codes like cattle parading with brands on their foreheads. Are those back page sponsors so intimidating that Newsweek would prefer to sully its prize-winning cover rather than lose a square inch of a Chevy ad? Freedom of the press means so much to a New York Times reporter that he goes to jail rather than obey a federal judge's order, but Redbook caves right in to Kool Super Lights. Has the computer revealed us to ourselves once again?

One noted journal, however, must be singled out for praise. Last June, Mad Magazine explained the symbol on its cover with the lurid headline: EXCLUSIVE: FBI RELEASES BIONIC MAN'S FINGER PRINTS!"

Peter Harnik



'HOTDAMN, JEB! I KNEW THERE WAS A SILVER LINING! I KNEW IT!'

CITY DESK CONT'D

picnic areas 16 and 17 near Military and Glover. Call Judy Holmes (783-3410) or Diane Shisk (447-0511) for info. . . . Dave Fleishman of the Washington Peace Center is off to Japan and John Cort is taking a job in India. . . . The Citizen Advisory Council of the police chief has been expanded to include a representative of the gay community. . . . The Zoning Commission considers new rules for ~~community residential facilities on May 21~~. . . . Martin Luther King library. The rules would allow in zones R1-4 facilities housing no more than four persons as a matter-of-right, facilities housing 5 to 9 persons as a matter of right but limited to one facility per square, and facilities housing nine or more persons or more than one per square with BZA approval. To testify write the Executive Director of the Zoning Secretariat by May 14.

Switkes Folds World's Greatest Newsletter

Ellen Switkes, who edited In-The-Works, a newsletter about local arts that modestly called itself "The World's Greatest Newsletter" has folded her publication. She says: "The thrill is gone, and so is the time and so is the money. . . . We've applied for a grant to purchase a cemetery plot at Forest Lawn. The proposal is entitled, 'An Exploration of the Death of the Written Word Which Coincides with a Proliferation of Newsletters in an Age of Aural and Visual Mish Mash.' I'm friends with just about everyone on the panel and they all say our chances are excellent.' One of our favorite columns in ITW, was "Overheard," which in the last edition offered these gleanings from a sharp ear: "I feel like I'm in Liverpool in 1962." (Overheard at a Urban Verbs concert). "This is not my kind of fountain. I prefer the type with kids pissing and fish kissing." (Overheard in the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden).

WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE TOW AWAY,
DOUG SCHNEIDER?

TELEPHONE 457-0076

JAMES L. OLSON, D.D.S.
General Dentistry

OFFICE HOURS
BY APPOINTMENT

1726 EYE STREET N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

Board of Trade Job Hustle

Sources at city hall tell us that the Board of Trade's much-touted Summer Jobs for Youth program is mostly fluff. They claim BOT inflates its figures by claiming credit for jobs that already exist. They can only track down about 700 jobs coming through the DC job bank. . . . The International Visitors Service needs volunteers fluent in French, Japanese, German and Spanish to help foreign visitors at four information centers this summer. Last year, IVIS aided 140,000 visitors. To find out more call Anne Coulter at 872-8747.

A Brooklynite Looks at Metro

~~J. J. Davis wrote about his experiences with Metro in a recent~~



Contrary to reports published in certain other journals, Marion Barry's City Slickers did not lose last month to the White House staff by 7-2 or even 12-7, but by 12-8. Working in the grand tradition of city hall, Barry's team waited until the late innings to get going, spurred by a three run homer by Jim Marshall of the Department of Environmental Services and two runs driven in by the mayor. Barry got three hits including a triple that seemed even to surprise him. Shown above is the mayor coming home in a photo by Leonard Cohen.

Throwing for the Slickers in the slow-pitch game at Guy Mason was Charlene Cheatham of the City Administrator's office. She also got two hits. Barry played a respectable first base and was aided in the field by Elijah Rogers, Ivanhoe Donaldson and Alan Grip.

Given that it was the Slickers' first experience in combat as a softball team, they displayed competence. Compassion was another matter. Thrice, Donaldson engaged in lengthy disputations with the umpire, involving minute inspections of that portion of the field upon which the play allegedly occurred - or allegedly didn't. Each time Donaldson was rebuffed, leading him to exclaim of the Rec Department ump, "Who pays this guy anyway?"

Attempts by the Gazette to obtain the box score uncovered a familiar problem regarding city paperwork. "It's a mess," we were told.

Also in keeping with mayoral mores, Barry's team attempted to reprogram its batting order in the last inning to bring Big Jim Marshall up for another hoped-for homer. The White House, probably someone from OMB, complained bitterly and the Slickers relented.

CHUCK STONE, newly returned to these pages, is starting a monthly newsletter to be called Stone's Journal. It promises, "concise and current reports on the economic vital statistics of black America; analysis and forecasts on politics, including insights into who's after the black vote, who has it and why; a digest on the latest developments in Africa; and a summary of the month's major activities of the Congressional Black Caucus." Charter subscriptions are \$15 and can be ordered from Stone's Journal c/o J. W. Mondesire, 6715 Lincoln Drive, Philadelphia, Pa 19119.

The Rockefeller Estate is assessed at \$2.70 a square foot while two nearby vacant lots are assessed for \$6.05 and \$8.68 a square foot. This sort of thing has led Palisader Carleen Joyce to file an appeal of all the property assessments in the city. . . . Big meeting of the Zoning Commission on May 14 to discuss planned unit developments in residential communities and elsewhere.

Serious shoaling the Potomac River reports Matt Krafft of the Potomac River Sailing Association.

issue of the Brooklyn Phoenix: "It cost billions and billions of dollars, and it's a lot of fun, especially if you're the sort of person who likes to hang out in the vicinity of pinball machines. . . Having glided to the launch pad, the traveller then saunters to a bank of discreet vending machines, inserts either a one or a five dollar bill, and sometimes receives a fare card and sometimes receives his one or his five dollar bill back again; the machines are particular, and do not take just any old money. This can cause some amusing scenes, especially as the attendant in his little booth doesn't have any change, wouldn't give you any change if he did, and exists principally to scold you if the turnstile eats your fare card, a not unknown occurrence. . . New Yorkers instinctively understand crowd rhythm and move with the flow, never touching each other unless they are drunk or picking somebody's pocket. . . Unversed in crowd rhythms, Washingtonians on the Metro collide and rebound like so many heat-crazed molecules."

Capitol Hill Day School Moving

The old Dent School, at 2nd & E SE, is being turned into a new home for the Capitol Hill Day School. CHDS has negotiated a \$2000

a month lease from the city for the next twenty years. Construction should be completed by November. . . The French Alliance now has 35 translators available, including 25 professional language experts. Info: Marie-Claire Bart, 234-0125. . . If you're looking for a different way of getting a college degree, you might want to check out the Campus-Free College, which offers tutorials, on-the-job learning, professional training programs and workshops, internships, action-research, and other individually designed activities leading to a degree. Each student is assigned to a program advisor of their choice. Tuition is \$1500 a year and CFC holds Candidate for Accreditation status with the Middle States Association. It hopes to get full accreditation by 1980. Info: 293-4858.

Furthermore

GAO says the city is rapidly approaching its legal debt limit and that bad management may cause difficulties for the city when it goes into the private bond market. Cites cost overruns such as the Watha Daniel branch library which was meant to cost \$772,000 but ended up costing \$1.7 million. Think how much the Barry Astrodud will cost if the estimates for that are as far off.

T'AIN'T FUNNY, MCGEE

Chuck Stone

MY 12-year-old son, Charlie, casually zinged the question at me with the untempered innocence of youth: "Daddy, are Polish people really dumb?"

As we drove along, I explained the history of scapegoat humor. Each group has had to suffer its turn at national ridicule. Dumb Irishmen. Greasy Italians. Sleazy Jews. Lazy Negroes.

It's taken the Poles a little longer to move out of the stereotype because they haven't had an NAACP or Anti-Defamation League in their communal arsenal.

In itself, humor is not dangerous. Satire forces us to laugh at our foibles. Jokes expose the soft underbelly of society's errors. Humor lathers the phonies and hangs them out to dry in the sunshine of applause.

But when humor is used to keep a group of people enslaved in the minds of others, it takes on dangerously repressive overtones. So all blacks are Amos 'n' Andys. So what? It only justifies not hiring those moronic, shoe shufflin' coons.

Stereotypes, however, are one of our down payments on a free and open society. Expensive, yes, but we only remain free to the extent we permit — and facilitate — the maximum expression of ideas. Knowing what constitutes "maximum" is democracy's dilemma.

When does titillation become pornography? Race hate become genocide? Ridicule becomes exclusion?

Minorities and other targets of majority mockery don't fret over those niceties as long as they can swim in the mainstream of abundance. They get nervous when they're forced to tread water in the backwater swamp of Bakke, Weber and Sears.

Those three court cases symbolize a new national surliness toward equality. In such a mood, blacks don't easily laugh at themselves as buffoons.

"Mr. Dugan" was a buffoon, a born-again legislative Stepin Fetchit. I'll confess a struggle raged inside me during the effort by the Congressional Black Caucus to prevent "Mr. Dugan" from being aired on TV. It was a form of pre-sanitized censorship. But I've also grown weary and exasperated with a culture which insists that the most popular role models for 26 million people are minstrels.

Polish-Americans are Johnny-come-latelys to derision. Blacks have been cinematic goons, theatrical clowns and boob-tube boobs for decades.

Granted that the caucus' solution, censorship, threatens free speech. But institutionalized racism masked by humor corrodes social progress.

My inner conflict wasn't made any easier after one of the most together sisters, Thelma Patterson, called me and said she would have preferred making her own decision about "Mr. Dugan." In other words, test its merits in the free marketplace of ideas.

Fine, if blacks could be included as its architects, instead of being dragged in only as its janitors. Folks who have lived "on top" all their lives just don't understand that kind of pain.

"Mr. Dugan" was a situation comedy about a stupid black congressman from Philadelphia. If there were 100 black members of Congress, it would be a sufficiently large population to prevent inferences. But there are only 17 black members of Congress. One happens to be from Philadelphia. And Philadelphia's Congressman William H. Gray 3rd has already emerged in the 96th Congress as one of its brightest stars.

Cleavon Little portraying the eyeball-rolling, cackling "Mr. Dugan" — a potentially vicious roman a clef — would have demeaned both him and an already pathetically small Congressional representation of black Americans.

Not that black congressmen aren't above the subjects of situation comedies. The possibilities are endless. So are TV dramas about the struggles of a black congressman to be an effective legislator.

But "Mr. Dugan's" producer, Norman Lear, God's gift to the perpetuation of racism by humor, is a member of an insensitive group of Hollywood producers, writers and directors who believe it permissible to degrade blacks.

A few are Jewish. And it is all the more tragic that they have refused to show the same sensitivity to blacks they extend to themselves after centuries as the butt of stereotypes in literature and theater.

It is a point Marlon Brando tried to make in his interview in the January issue of Playboy. The interviewer asked him about his remarks about "Jewish heads of studios who were in power during the heyday of the cowboy-and-Indians pictures."

Replied Brando: "The non-Jewish executives you take for granted are going to exploit any race for a buck. But you'd think that the Jews would be sensitized to that, that they wouldn't have done it or allowed it. You've always seen the wily Filipino, the treacherous Jap, the destructive Chinese, the fierce, savage, blood-lusting buck and the squaw who loves the American marshal or soldier. You've seen every race besmirched, but never saw an image of the kike. Because the Jews were ever watchful for that — and rightly so. They never allowed it to be shown onscreen."

Brando was saying what the Congressional Black Caucus was trying to communicate about "Mr. Dugan:" When you've been stepped on all your life, 'tain't funny, McGee."

(Philadelphia Daily News)

ACTION NOTES

VOLUNTEER CLEARING HOUSE: Needs drivers to take senior citizens to appointments, assist them in collecting food stamps, running errands, shopping etc. Call 333-0455.



HEALING RESOURCES

A comprehensive guide to alternative therapy, preventive medicine and holistic health practices in the area. \$5.95 from DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW DC 20009. (Add 30¢ DC tax).

**JOHN EATON SCHOOL
IS ALIVE WITH**

The Sound of Music

Two Performances
May 24th & 25th, 8 PM
34th & Lowell Sts. NW
\$2 adults & \$1 children

AD RATES

\$1 per column inch; \$15 per quarter page; \$30 per half page; \$60 per page. Column width: 2½". Non-profit groups may purchase ads at one-half these rates if ad is camera-ready and paid in advance. Half-tones and line art requiring reduction or enlargement: \$4 each. Make-up charges: \$15 per hour for ads not camera-ready. Classified rate: 10 cents a word paid in advance. Send ads to DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW, DC 20009.

CLASSIFIED

CLASSIFIED ADS: 10 cents a word. Payment must be enclosed with ad. Deadline: Third Tuesday of the month. Send to DC Gazette, 1739 Conn Ave. NW, DC 20009.

PRINCETON government summer interns need reasonably inexpensive accommodations mid June to September. Send listings - location, price, space available, whom to contact, etc., to Newell Brown, Director Career Services, Clio Hall, Princeton NJ 08540. su

CLERK/TYPIST: Very busy non-profit citizens action group needs individual to provide office support services (filing, typing, reception/phone duties). Organizational abilities a must. 20 hours/week (including one evening/week). \$4/hour. Dupont Circle area. Start immediately. Call 223-1246.

PIANOS TUNED AND REPAIRED by Registered Craftsman, Piano Technician's Guild. Satisfaction guaranteed. Matthew Walton 265-5042. au

GUY MASON RECREATION CENTER, 3600 Calvert NW, offers adult classes in arts and crafts, dancing and other activities. Call 282-2180.

PRE-ENLISTMENT COUNSELING PROGRAM: Washington Peace Center, weekdays, 3-6 pm. 234-2000.

DRIVERS NEEDED: Christian Communities Committed to Change needs volunteer drivers for its new dial-a-ride service in NE and NW. Anyone available for 2/3 trips a month should call 387-3020.

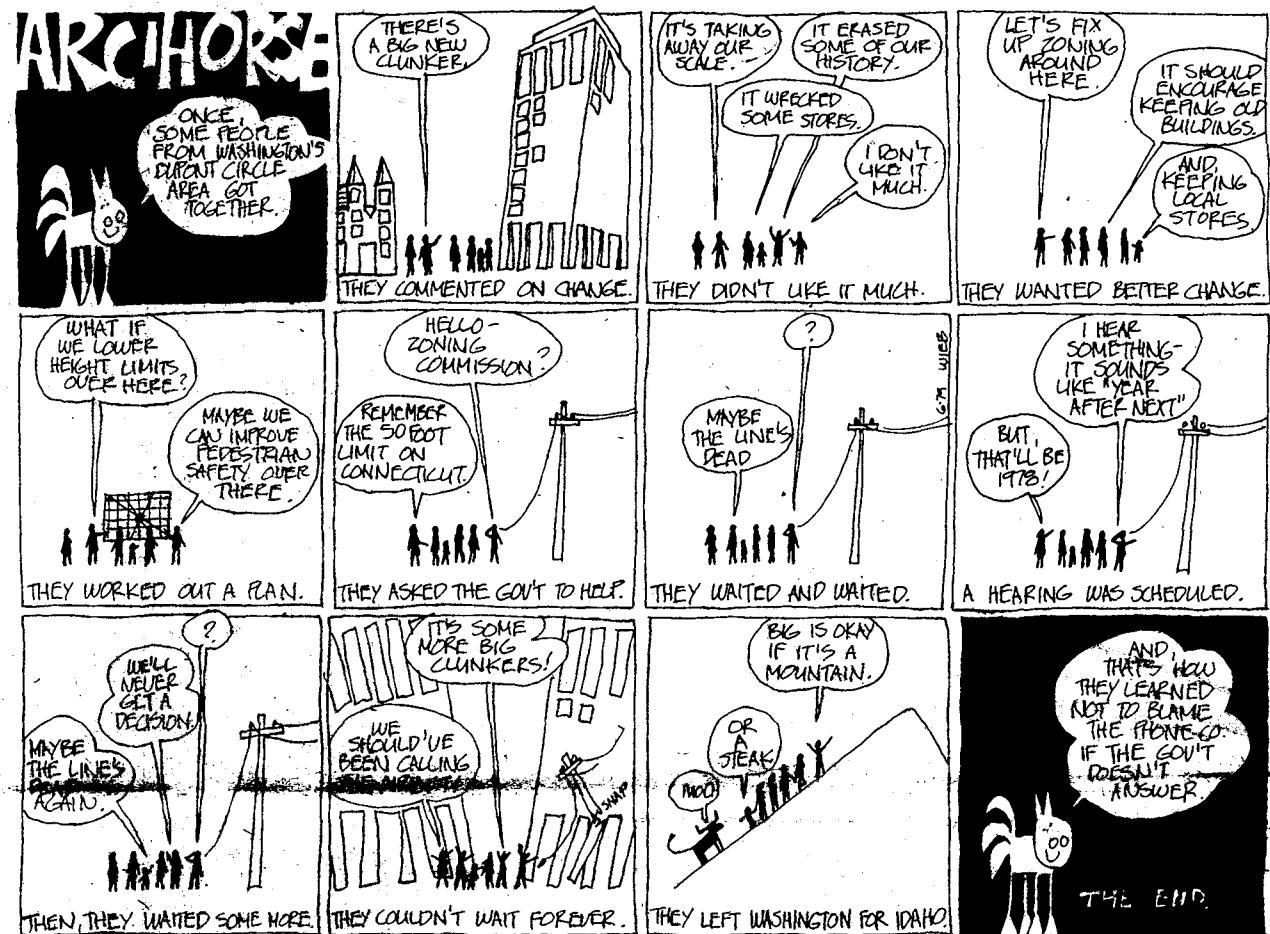
TWIN OAKS COMMUNITY (Louisa, Va. 23093, 703-894-5126) offers a series of Communal Living Weeks this summer. Participants will explore most aspects of intentional commun-

GUIDE TO FEDERALLY ASSISTED HOUSING IN THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA: Published by the Metropolitan Council of Governments. Info: 223-6800 ext 375.

FEMINIST ALLIANCE MEETINGS: June 13, July 12 & August 13. 7 pm at All Soul's, 16th & Harvard NW.

DC COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA: Auditions every Monday, Shaw Junior High, 10th & RI Ave. NW, 8 pm. String brass and woodwind needed. Call Peggy Penn, 546-2636.

DON'T forget to send in your homestead exemption affidavit which the city mailed to you. It can save you \$138 on your property taxes. The deadline is June 1. If you own your home and live in it, but didn't get an affidavit, call 727-6410.



The Other Side of Boomtown

THE LOCAL Urban League recently released a survey of six major low income areas of the city. The random sample of households in Adams Morgan, Mt. Pleasant, the 14th Street corridor, Near NE and Anacostia reminds one that not everybody in town is sharing in the city's speculative economy. Here are a few of the findings:

- 31 percent of the household heads have no job income, relying on public assistance in one form or another.
- 30% of the respondents have moved in the past two years; of these 43% moved because of increased rents, evictions or urban renewal.
- 47% said they had a "great deal" of pride in their neighborhood; 26% said "some."
- The physical condition of the neighborhood was very important to 60% of the respondents and important to 23%.
- 65% said the rent control bill had not helped them to keep their house or apartment.
- 66% of the homeowners said they had been approached to sell their house; 83% of the approaches were from realtors; and 98% of those approached said they aren't going to sell.
- 24% of the respondents were unemployed; another 7% were unemployed and not looking for work. Of the latter, 93% were not looking for work because they were a full-time housewife, retired, a student or ill or disabled.
- Of the unemployed, 41% said they had clerical skills, 27% were skilled in the machine trades, and 17% in auto repair.
- 85% of the respondents said they would be willing to let light industry and business locate in their neighborhood if there were jobs for residents.
- 97% thought youth crime was a serious problem in DC with 48% saying that providing more jobs for youths would help.
- 68% thought police officers should live in DC; 78% thought that criminals not convicted of a violent crime should have access to family and/or community outside the detention center.
- 58% thought that black officers in black communities and latino officers in latino communities could handle problems better than white officers.
- 51% favored decriminalization of marijuana.
- 52% of the respondents do not own a car; 44% use the bus to get to work; and only 5% use the subway. 76% never use the subway.
- 91% said that crime on Metrorail was a serious problem and 24% said they personally had been robbed or assaulted on a bus.
- 51% said they feared for their children's safety at school, with most citing crime as the reason.
- 51% said that the DC schools were not providing quality education for their children and another 18% said they didn't know.